VALERIE'S ONE TRUE LOVE

by Fred Shafer

An esoteric life story about Love, kundalini, metaphysics, yoga and enlightenment.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

I spent some time with a dear friend. He bought property on the same road as my place. I live out in the country in the Ozarks. I only saw him a few times over the years. He was picking up his mail or watering flowers by his gate. One day I was heading into town and I saw him by his mailbox. I stopped to say hello and be neighborly. We talked about the weather and some other things. Then he told me his situation, he could no longer pass the vision test to drive. He wanted to find someone to run him into town. I said to get in because I was heading to town right then. We talked along the way, I had been thinking about money that morning. By the time I dropped him off we had worked out a deal. Once a week I would take him to town, and then help him sort through his mail.

I had never seen his place before only the driveway going up the hill. When we drove down the other side there was a small house, a barn and a greenhouse. After we got his groceries put away he showed me around. There were flower beds and a pond. I asked him if it was there when he bought the property. He said he had dug it by hand.

We went to the greenhouse and it was thick with vegetables. He asked me if I liked different things while he filled up some grocery bags. When I realized he was doing it for me. I told him I did not need that much. He said that I could freeze or share them.

We sat on the porch after we were done. It was a good view of the pond and the wooded hills. I told him what a pretty place he had. He said it was his, "as above, so below" project. There was bird food on the ground inside a fenced area. There was also a rack of bird feeders on poles. Hundreds of birds were eating, many different kinds. While he was showing me the place. He poured some corn in different spots a ways down the hill. While we were resting on the porch, some deer crossed the creek to eat the corn. After several minutes there were over a dozen.

I started driving him to town every week. Also helping with other things that required good vision. He gave me a box one day. He said it contained his wishes about his property in the event of his death. He asked me not to open it until then.

He passed on recently, I found him in a chair on his front porch. I thought he was sleeping because he looked so peaceful. When the ambulance came they were wondering what to do. I told them about the box and said that I would call them.

The box contained a Will which made me the executor of his estate. There were also many pads of paper telling his life story. There was a list of requests. One was that his place be given to a young couple he knew in town. Along with all of the tools and the truck. Another request was that I share his life story. He asked me to write this introduction. The last thing was that his name would not be mentioned.

I wish I had known all of this while he was still alive. I understood a number of things that happened. We were sitting on the porch right after dark. The fireflies had started and we were enjoying the view. He waved his hand across like he was wiping a mirror. I thought he was stretching. It is hard to describe, but the entire view lit up with colors. Everything was surrounded by dancing lights.

There was another time when a bird hit a window as we were sitting there. That happens sometimes when you live out in the woods. It looked like it's neck was broken. He went and got it then came back and sat down. He kissed it and said, "I love you." Then he shut his eyes and held it between his hands. After about a minute he opened up his hands and the bird was trying to stand up. He kissed it again and said, "I love you." After a few minutes he lifted up his hands and the bird flew off. He said it was only stunned, but I knew I had seen something unusual.

On every trip to town something odd would happen. After a few times I asked him about it. He just smiled at me and I never asked him again. One time we saw someone with car trouble. When we stopped to help them, it was my best friend from high school. They had been elsewhere for nearly forty years. They had recently come back home to live.

Their car had a flat tire and the spare was also flat. We dropped off the tires at the garage. Then all of us went shopping together. We picked up the tires and fixed the car on the way home. Now I visit with my high school friend every week.

Another time there was a car a ways ahead of us. We watched it run off the road. When we stopped it was upside down at the bottom of the hill. He said he wanted to go down there. To see if there was anything we could do before we went off to call an ambulance.

He climbed down the hill and got the passenger door open. Then he crawled inside the car. In a few minutes I saw him working his way out, then another man crawled out. He helped the man up the hill and we carried him in to the clinic. A hornet had stung the driver in the ear. That car could not be seen from the road. If we had not watched it run off, we would have driven right on by. Every so often would be fine, but something strange happened every time.

There was another thing that was unusual. When I was going out to the woods to sprinkle his ashes. Two bald eagles started circling overhead as soon as I left my house. At first I did not think anything about it, because I see them every so often. When they followed along with me all the way out in the woods. I knew something strange was going on.

His life story follows. I hope that you will share it with others, if you know someone that might want to read it.

Fred Shafer

CHAPTER 2 - VALERIE

These pages attempt to weave conversations and experiences from my life, into a sensible narrative. If some parts seem extraordinary. They are nothing against the conspicuous miracles of who we are, where we have been and where we are going.

Four years after college, I lived in the upper Midwest of the United States. Working in a factory as an electrical engineer. We had just put 1958 to bed and were slugging our way through January. Outside of work I was a solitary bird, my nest was a small apartment in a small town.

The winters were bitter cold. On a twenty-below night I was shopping in a general store. It was almost ten, closing time. There were no other customers, a middle-aged woman was preparing the store to close.

She looked up and smiled saying, "Hello."

I saw on her vest her name was Valerie. I smiled back, "Hello yourself." We chatted as she rang up my items. I asked, "Did you have car trouble today? I didn't see one in the parking lot. Considering this storm I was just wondering."

"Yes, it wouldn't start. A neighbor was kind enough to bring me to work."

"Are they coming to pick you up?"

"I was just getting ready to call my sister."

"I would be happy to give you a ride, to save her coming out in this blizzard. It's so easy to get stuck or slide through a stoplight."

She smiled, "Thank you for that kind offer."

"I'll wait in my car until you get the store closed."

"You're such a dear, I can't express my thanks."

Bundled up in a parka she locked the store. I held the car door against the wind while she got seated. As we left the well-lit parking lot, the night took on an otherworldly feel. Along with the snow came tides of subtle energy. An ordinary drive through a small town, turned into a surreal arctic adventure. On the way we were the only car on the road. The wind was churning the heavy snowfall, another arctic interlude courtesy of the Great Lakes. The roads were treacherous, but I was well practiced ice skating with my car.

As we turned into her driveway she asked, "I was going to make an omelet, would you care to join me? I'd like to thank you for the ride home."

Although that sounded good I said, "Thank you, that's very kind. But I don't want to disturb your household."

"It's only me, I live by myself. It would be nice with someone else at the table, I really appreciate the ride."

I decided, "An omelet sounds great, I'm starved. I wanted to say yes, but not if it caused a commotion."

We shuffled through the snow into her house, taking off our overshoes and parkas. She switched on the lights. I smiled, admiring her lovely Midwestern home. The kitchen was spacious and inviting, with a nice antique table. There were polished oak floors, the furniture was hand crafted. My apartment was bare bones so it was a treat.

She put her things away and began cooking. I jumped when the phone rang. Her sister was wondering if she was home safely. We chatted as we ate, getting to know each other.

She asked, "Why were you out so late, on such a harsh night."

"I'm off work tomorrow, so I decided to go out and get a bite to eat. Then I went to see a movie, there were only five of us in the theater."

When we finished eating she suggested, "Why don't you go watch TV, while I wash these dishes."
There was a big gray cat curled up on the couch. After I got settled, she climbed in my lap and started purring. In a few minutes Valerie came to the living room, carrying a tray with mugs of hot chocolate. Telling me, "Be careful, it's still very hot."
"Thank you very much. There's nothing like hot chocolate on a cold winter night."
"You should feel honored. My cat usually hides when anyone else is around. Her name is Naomi."
"I've always had a cat friend since I was little, but I can't where I live now. She's sad about something, and I got her name as Noni for some reason." Valerie looked at me carefully, "She was my mother's, she misses her. Why do you think her name is Noni?"
"She told me."
"That was my mother's nickname for her."
She looked thoughtful then asked, "You seem familiar to me, do I know you from somewhere?"
"I've been thinking the same thing. I shop in the store now and then, maybe that's it."

We talked about the forecast as we listened to the wind howling. After a bit I said, "Thank you very much for the omelet. With even more thanks for the pleasant company. I'll be on my way, I'm sure you're tired from work. Before I go may I ask about your car, do you know what's wrong with it?"
"The battery won't hold a charge."
"Okay then, how about this for a plan? I'll come back in the morning to swap out the battery. I'm a skilled mechanic and it'll be my treat. I try to do something nice every now and then, to keep the scale from tipping over. I've changed lots of car batteries, it's not really a big deal. So what do you think about that idea?"
She smiled, "That's a very kind offer. It really would be nice to get my car running. I prefer not to burden others. Would it be okay if we square things up next week?"
"Please don't worry about the money, consider it a heartfelt gift. Tomorrow you'll be helping someone else, maybe it will be me. In the grand scheme of things everything will balance out."

She thought for a moment. Then pointed to a door down the hall, "Okay, how about this for a plan? That's the guest room, why don't you sleep there tonight? It's not fit for man nor beast outside. And there won't be anyone else on the road if you have car trouble. I'll fix you breakfast and it will save you having to come back."
It sounded right I said, "That's a great plan."
Just before she went to her room. She looked in my eyes and said, "Good night, and thank you again for the ride home."
When she did that, my world was swept away. A floodgate opened and I was overcome with emotion. I knew I found my one true love, after years of waiting and wondering. As she went to her room my eyes filled with tears. I looked down, trying to keep my composure.

I woke up confused then recalled the events. It was early, I decided to stretch and meditate. Then shovel the driveway at sunrise, the snow was two feet deep. Dawn was clear and calm, the sunrise was inspiring. The snow reflected brilliant points of light. I was no stranger to snow shovels. When I got hers from the garage I found a beautiful Pontiac Streamliner. The interior was mint, under the hood was immaculate. I pulled the battery and put it in my trunk.
I liked shoveling snow, it was a full body workout. The crystals sparkled in rainbow colors as I threw them in the air. Using a breath pattern in time with the strokes. I did twice the work with half the effort. Switching hands now and then to keep things balanced. In a few minutes I took off my coat.
When I was almost done I saw Valerie's neighbor. She waved, wondering about me. I thought it best to introduce myself. As we chatted, I offered to shovel her driveway. We were pals after that, her name was Eve. The workout was great in the crisp morning air. I stowed the shovel and caressed the Pontiac. Going inside after seeing a light on.

Valerie was working in the kitchen. She gave me a cheerful, "Good morning, come and have some breakfast. Would you like some coffee?"
"And good morning to you, I hope you slept well. How about tea?"
"I've already got some made, come and sit down. I was looking for you and saw you shoveling the driveway. Thank you very much, and for Eve's too. She's very sweet, we try to look out for each other."
"This morning my goal in life, is you driving to work. I figured shoveling the driveway would be a good start in that direction."
"Where did you learn to shovel snow like that? That would have taken me all day."
"When I was little, I made a lot of money shoveling snow. Sometimes ten driveways in a day. I started at three in the morning, so they could get out and go to work."
"How old were you?"
"Somewhere around twelve, I really liked having a mitt full of cash. There were all kinds of enterprises. Mowing yards, painting houses, fixing things, raking leaves, stuff like that."
She served breakfast, listening and smiling. The kitchen was warm and cheerful, we talked more over a pleasant meal.

After a subzero trip to the parts store, I installed the new battery. It was the best one they stocked. Nothing was too good for my four-wheeled crush. She ran perfectly and was charging properly. I checked the fluids and tires for good measure.
Returning to the house I gave Valerie the keys, "You're good to go, now I'll get out of your hair. So you can get some peace and quiet before work."
As I zipped my parka she asked, "To express my thanks for fixing my car. How about if I cooked you dinner sometime?"
"I think that would be wonderful, let's make a plan."
"I'm off Wednesdays and Thursdays." We agreed on a time the following Wednesday.
We stopped for a moment. Looking in her eyes, I thanked her for her hospitality. Then kissed her cheek, it was nice. Driving to my apartment I thought of everything that happened. Trying to sort it all out.

Time dragged, finally it was Wednesday afternoon. I was the technical supervisor at our factory, giving me control of the schedule. I had the next two days off. Still distracted after plenty of time to think. I showered and shaved, making myself presentable. Leaving for Valerie's to arrive a little early. At last I knocked on her door, carefully holding a vase of flowers. I held my breath as the door opened.
Valerie offered a welcoming, "Hello!" She was so beautiful my heart melted, the flowers made her smile even more. Placing them on the table she said, "Forgive me for saying this, but I was wondering if you might not come."
I confessed, "For the last week, all I could think about was this moment." I looked her up and down, she was so lovely my knees went weak.
She said, "Before you left, I forgot to ask if you like spaghetti."
I assured her I did, wondering if I should sit at the table.
"Would you like a glass of wine?"
Although I rarely drank, I told her I would enjoy a sip. Hoping it would settle my nerves.
She suggested, "Would you like to listen to music?" Showing me a cabinet with her records. They were half popular and half Classical.
I asked, "Do you have a preference?"
"No, you pick."

As she worked in the kitchen. I selected several albums, stacking them on the hi-fi. There was a bookcase so I read the titles. There were a few about paranormal events. From the kitchen doorway I

asked, "Are you interested in metaphysics?"
She smiled and shrugged. "Fingal's Cave" was playing in the living room. She asked, "How did you know Mendelssohn is my favorite?"
I smiled, my turn to shrug.
She asked, "It doesn't seem like anyone, listens to Classical music these days. How did you come to like it?"
"I play the piano. Although I'll be first to admit, I started with popular music. A couple of those albums of Classical hits got me on track."
She invited me to sit as she served the plates, I helped her with her chair. While we ate we talked about current events. Enjoying the moment and the pleasure of good company. She took a pie from the oven, "I hope you like apple."
"It's my favorite and it smells delicious."
"We should wait a few minutes until it cools, it will be piping hot."
As she began clearing the table, I offered to do the dishes.
She laughed, "No, you go make yourself comfortable. I'll be done shortly."

The glass of wine had relaxed my tension. I surrendered to the harmonies from the record player. In a short while Valerie came to the living room. Sitting in a chair, also smiling to herself.
She started as if remembering something. Saying the last thing I expected, "I have some marijuana, would you like to smoke some?"
I laughed with surprise, "Only if you want to."
She went and got a small wooden box asking, "Do you know how to roll a reefer?"
"Yes, that's a required skill to graduate from college." Though out of practice, I produced a respectable effort. As I finished I asked, "How were you introduced to the sacred herb?"
"My sister, she gets it from her son."
"Is he in college?"
She smiled, "Yes, he's kind of a beatnik."
"That explains it, I was wondering how he started smoking. The jazz scene is where it caught on with musicians. That spread to colleges and the beatniks. So how did you and your sister get involved?"
"She has arthritis and was hurting one night. Her son was home for the holidays. So he talked her into trying it, to help distract her from her hands. It worked so she got a corncob pipe. If she wakes up in the middle of the night. She'll have a puff, so she can get back to sleep. Then she talked me into trying it. We laughed like we were back in grade school. I don't smoke it very often, only on special occasions."
I suggested we step outside, to keep the odors from the house.
She smiled and nodded, "You read my mind."

Standing on the back porch we passed the reefer. Enjoying the brisk air and stark winter landscape. Returning to the living room, the jitters I brought were long gone. The Debussy floating from the hi-fi made everything perfect. I said, "That was the best dinner I've ever had."
She looked at me smiling, also enjoying the moment.
After watching TV for a while I said, "I guess I'll be on my way."
She smiled and suggested, "Don't go yet."
In a bit I saw she was asleep, wondering if I should leave. But I was afraid she might feel bad when she awoke. I waited on the couch with crossed legs, meditating.
After a time she stirred. I stretched my legs, shifting gears. She said, "I'm so sorry for falling asleep, please forgive me."
"I would certainly do so, but there's nothing to forgive. I didn't want to leave without thanking you for dinner. Now I will, so you can get some rest. It's getting past my bedtime too. Thank you for the wonderful evening. It's been the nicest thing I've done in a long time."
Valerie smiled, "You're welcome to stay."

"I'm wondering about the neighborhood grapevine, propriety and all that."
"Too late for that, I guarantee Eve has spread the news already. Probably before you were done shoveling her driveway."
"I really enjoyed staying over last time, that sounds great."
Sleeping in the guest room, I awoke in the wee hours. Valerie was slipping under the covers. Whispering, "For some reason, I thought you had gone home. I'm so glad you're here."

In the morning she was asleep facing me. I watched until her eyes opened. She smiled and said, "Good morning."
As she started to get up I suggested, "Why don't you stay here, and I'll fix breakfast this morning."
"You know, that sounds like fun. Some mornings I almost wish I had a maid."
I laughed, asking what she wanted.
"Tea and toast would be delightful."
"Here or in the kitchen?"
"The kitchen, I'm afraid I might get crumbs in the bed."

As the teapot whistled, she came to the kitchen in a robe and slippers. The table was set, the toaster popped as I poured the tea. While we ate she smiled and said, "I've got to ask you something." Seeing me nod she continued, "How long can you do that in bed?"
I shrugged, "I don't know."
She said lightly, "That's definitely not normal, in a good way. I bet you had plenty of girlfriends in high school."
I told her sincerely, "I had two girlfriends in high school, and the same thing happened both times. When we got to the point of going past first base. All they were thinking about was bragging to their friends. That sort of turned me off, because I sincerely believed the matter was sacred. After I didn't take them up on their offers. They trashed me to anyone who would listen. I realized it was happening for a reason, I knew I was supposed to wait. That I would know for certain when the time was right. I couldn't answer your question, because last night was my first time."
Valerie looked at me thoughtfully.
I said lightly, "Sometime I think we should find out how long, in the name of science and all that. I've been doing yoga for many years, there are a number of benefits." She smiled and we stood to kiss.

As we ate I asked, "What do you want to do today?"
"What would you like to do?"
"I want to do whatever you would do, if I weren't here."
She laughed, "No you don't."
"Why not?"
"Because I'd spend the morning doing chores."
I smiled, "That sounds perfect, what have you got that I could do?"
She laughed and shook her head, "I'm starting to wonder if you're from this planet. But if you really want to help, would you mind shopping while I tidy up? I'll be close to finished when you get back. Then we can think of something fun for this afternoon." She got a paper off the refrigerator, "See if you can make heads or tails of this list."
Going through the items, I asked questions and made notes. Then braved the arctic landscape wandering off to the grocery. While shopping I added things on impulse, including a selection of wines.
As I carried the bags into the kitchen she asked, "What was the damage?"
I said with a smile, "Funny thing about that, the cashier said my order was free. I guess she liked the cut of my jib."
In her best firm voice Val insisted, "No, tell me how much."
"The problem is, I bought things that were not on the list. It's only right I pay for those. Figuring all

that out would take the rest of our day off."
She smiled, "All I've got to do is fold the laundry, then I'll be done." I helped, we finished in no time.

As we folded the bedclothes I asked, "Did you think of anything fun to do?"
"Well I didn't think of anything fun, but I did think of something. If we move a few things around in the garage, you could park your car inside."
"That sounds great, but how about I do that while you relax. It's below zero, so it'll be pretty cold in the garage."
"If you really don't mind go ahead, I'll start on the ironing mountain."
Brrr, it was cold in the garage. That was good in one way, I worked as fast as I could. Soon my car was inside, I hoped she would make friends with the Pontiac.
Val's ironing board was in the basement, I went down to report the news. She looked at me smiling. I had a flash, "I bet I know what you really want to do, and it isn't ironing."
"What?"
"Make a sandwich and watch TV with your feet up. Then take a nap, to recharge from a long week at the store."
Pretending to look suspicious she asked, "Now just how do you know that?"
"I promise to tell you sometime. We're supposed to be doing what you would do, if I weren't here. We turned in a good morning's work. I think a sandwich and a nap sounds nice."
We watched game shows, enjoying sandwiches and chips. I stretched while she got ready for bed. In a few minutes I tucked in the covers, kissing her cheek, "Sweet dreams." Then napped in the guest room.

When I woke up the sun was setting, I shuffled out to the kitchen. Pouring me a cup of tea she winked, "I can read your mind too you know."
I nodded reflectively, "Some believe that everything and everyone are connected. It's a very interesting idea, I've been considering for a long time."
She looked at me thoughtfully, then kept preparing dinner.
Starting to wake up I asked, "What can I do to help?"
"How about peel some potatoes?" I made short work of those, asking for something else. She remarked, "That was fast, do you know how to cook?"
"Just well enough to keep from starving."

When we finished eating, I began collecting the dishes. She said, "No, I will do the dishes."
I countered, "You cooked I wash, a maxim to live by. You go relax and I'll bring you a glass of wine, any preference?"
"I saw those, thank you. How about if you choose the wine?" After taking her the glass I finished the dishes. When I went to the living room she laughed, "I could get to like this."
Seeing the gage box on the table I joked, "Ah, yer want some wacky terbacky huh?" She laughed and nodded. It was great smoking in the subzero air. Thoroughly mellow, we snuggled on the couch watching television.
The next morning after breakfast, she did the dishes while I sat at the table. Then she sat as well. We looked at each other lovingly, holding hands. I told her, "The last two days have been the best ones of my life."
We kissed at the front door. She asked, "Will you come back next Wednesday?"
"Yes, and I expect it will be like last week. All I could think about was seeing you again."

CHAPTER 3 - THE ZOO

After the longest week in history, I turned into Val's driveway. We had a pleasant dinner, then snuggled on the couch watching an old movie. Later we made love. As we cuddled afterwards I started to glow, deliberately spreading the light to surround her.

As usual I woke up early. After yoga in the guest room, I decided on ironing to pass the time. The basket was almost empty when Val came down the stairs. Looking at the hangar rack she said, "You are fast."

"Practice makes perfect. I'll be done in a few minutes then I'll bring everything up. So be thinking of something fun to do."

At the table we munched toast and sipped tea. She said, "When I woke up and couldn't find you upstairs. I wondered if you had gone home."

"In a way I did, I lived in our basement when I was a teen. When I woke up early, I'd do the ironing as a meditation."

As we put the laundry away I said, "Now I'll prove for certain, I can share your thoughts."

She gave me a questioning look.

I told her confidently, "This morning you're surprised you have so much energy. You want to go out and do something, but haven't decided what."

She smiled, "Maybe I should be careful what I think. You seem to be a good mind reader."

"I've never cared for the expression, mind reading. For me it's more like pictures, impressions that hold information."

"I'm beginning to believe, you know more than you say."

I laughed, "I hope that's better than saying more than I know. Let's see if we can find something to do. How much ambition do you have, would you like to go to the zoo? That would be fifty minutes each way. I'll drive so you can enjoy the trip. We could have dinner afterwards."

Val was thoughtful, "I haven't been to the zoo since I was a little girl. I wonder if it's open in the winter."

"Yes, I visit occasionally and I like winter the best. There are heated buildings, a Natural History museum and greenhouses."

She decided, "You know that sounds like fun, let's go."

The day was clear, warm for late winter. On the way we chatted, it seemed like minutes before we turned into the zoo. The ticket kiosk was shuttered. Val said, "Oh no, it looks like it's closed."

I shook my head and smiled, "We have to pay at the Administration building." I knew the layout, winding our way to the elephants. As we got closer I saw my friend waiting. I said, "Good, he's outside. Let me tell you about him, because he's very special. When we first met he was distant. Maybe a little depressed, but he hadn't given in to it. I respected him for that, his sterling character was shining through. He was challenging himself, was his mind in control or his emotions? I sent him, 'Look within. You planned this. Remember why.'"

Val gave me a questioning look.

My friend came as close as possible, I centered myself gathering energy. Creating a glowing ball in my cupped hands, then charging it with Love. With a heartfelt "I Love You!", I showered him with the golden light.

He smiled broadly and nodded, we were connected.

I sent, "Meet Valerie."

He looked at her with one eye then the other, nodding and smiling.

I told Val, "He sent, 'Happy to meet you.' If you want to respond, picture it in your mind and think it clearly. He will get it no problem, he's very smart."

"I don't know what to say."

"Ask him to lift a leg, to see if you're getting through. Carefully picture him doing that, and write out 'Please' underneath."
Val looked thoughtful.
Our pal lifted a leg, then gave her a big smile.
Val looked at me with wide eyes.
After more pleasant conversation I sent, "Goodbye friend, see you soon."

As we walked away Val was considering everything. Then asked, "Did I just see what I saw? Now I know why you like coming to the zoo."
"Now you also know why I like to visit in winter. That's not as easy with a lot of people around. Let me tell you about him. When we first met, I felt his sadness from the parking lot. Along with a strong impulse to help. He was closed pretty tight. I spent a long time, at least an hour. Eventually I made the connection. I realized how smart he is and appealed to his intellect. An emotional approach is usually better with animals.
The next time I came to visit he was excited. He wanted to tell me about his discovery. Watching the visitors carefully. He tried to find the answer, 'Why would he want to live like that?' Seeing the children, everything became clear. The only way most people could meet his kind, was in this arrangement. He realized he represents all elephants, and decided to make that his life's work. He embraced that idea with the limitless power of Love.
So now he spends his days showing off. Doing everything he can to make friends with the visitors. He has many thousands and it gives him great satisfaction, especially the children. I'm sure I know him from somewhere. He'll be advancing a rung soon, maybe after this life. He's going to get some big bonus points for this one."

Val was thinking then asked, "Would you explain what happened with the elephant?"
I smiled and led her to a bench. Suggesting, "Maybe I could tell you a fairy tale instead? It might shed some light on the subject."
She smiled, nodding yes.
I began lightly, "Once upon a time there was a magical world. The best part was that the animals were quite aware. They could also share that awareness with each other. But for some reason, they could not do that with people.
The animals loved the sun more than anything. They knew it was the true source of their lives. It created the ocean of glittering light that bestowed their existence. They all swam in a boundless sea of energy, a potent vital force. They used it to keep their bodies alive, and to create the very world they lived in. There was one thing that truly amazed the animals. That the people were unaware, they lived in a radiant ocean.
Things went merrily along like they do in fairy tales. Until one day, one of the people got hit on the head by an apple. After that, they could also see the sparkling ocean of life.
Then they noticed something interesting, under certain conditions they understood the animals. The animals understood them as well. Provided they conversed in the form of a comic book. Then they all lived happily ever after, the end."
Val started laughing, "Thank you for that lovely fable. The thing is, I saw the sparkles when you threw them over him. That's why I asked you to explain."
I looked at her with wide eyes, "Are you kidding, you saw them?"
She nodded.
I thought for a moment, "That changes everything, but I should have known."
She looked puzzled, "Why do you say that?"
"Let's just say it was something I noticed, when you looked in my eyes."

After a moment I asked, "Would you like to try an experiment? One that relates to the ocean of energy."

Val was thoughtful then said, "Yes."
I took her hands, holding them between mine. Looking in her eyes, I charged my right hand with the vital force. So it would flow through hers to my left. The most unusual part of all of this, I had to make an effort to hold back. There was considerably more energy at my disposal. From holding hands with my one true love.
Her eyes gave her away when she felt the energy. I kept that going for a while, wanting to raise her vibrations. Then I let go of her hands and cupped mine together, compressing the energy into a ball. Turning up the dial and streaming more of the golden light. Just before it became physical I gave it to her. Closing her hands around it, "Can you feel that?"
With a thoughtful look she nodded.
"Can you see it?"
She smiled, nodding yes.
I knew we should return it to the atmosphere. Suggesting, "Think an uplifting thought. While you throw it in the air above us, like it was a handful of confetti."
She did, as the glittering particles scattered they faded out. Being reabsorbed by the atmosphere. She smiled and said, "Wow."

She was curious about collecting energy so I gave her a few tips. Then we practiced visualizations and breath techniques. I started laughing, "I bet this isn't what you were expecting, when I asked about coming to the zoo."
"No it isn't, but to tell the truth this is better."
Suggesting we talk further as we walked, I helped her from the bench. We practiced by showering the animals with light. I thought it best to save the Love part for another time. To walk for a while before we tried to run.
I had a friend among the zookeepers. One of those everyday saints, we are sometimes lucky enough to meet. His love and devotion to the animals had worked it's magic over the years. There was a twinkle in his eye and Love in his heart. He was watching us that day now and then. I introduced Val and we all chatted. He knew about me along with everything else at the zoo, they were a part of each other.
When we first met, he noticed I could understand his friends and mentioned the subject. We worked together to improve his ability. Being innocent and pure he was a quick study, because he truly loved the animals. He was happy I found Valerie, still keeping his usual serene expression. We said the fond goodbyes of kindred spirits.

Val asked, "Do you have any other friends here?"
"Yes, a few." We wandered around showering the animals with light. Approaching the carnivores I pointed to a small opening, "Let's blast that door and see if she'll come out." Val was getting better at collecting energy, we flooded the door with light. I said, "Now, let's see."
A tiger face appeared, recognizing me she padded over. I made the connection, introducing Valerie.
She looked at Val intently, then flipped the tip of her tail once.
I said, "That was tiger for, 'Hello Valerie.'" We communed for a bit, trading polite goodbyes.
As we walked away I noted, "She's the most advanced animal I've met at this zoo. Her personality reminds me of a samurai warrior. Even in her confinement, she's patient and collected. I wish I had a tenth of her mental discipline. That's why she chose this life, to further hone her razor sharp will. Her spiritual senses are highly developed too. It might appear she's trapped in that cage. But like most cats, she can easily leave her physical body. She spends most of her time roaming.
She only tolerates me because I can commune with her. It won't be much longer until she's also in a higher class. We first met back in the stone ages, when she ate me. We had a connection I could rekindle. I'm not sure I could have done it otherwise, because there are no cracks in her shell."

Val asked, "What exactly is will?"

"Will is a divine gift we all have, it permits us to shape our lives. It's sort of like the steering wheel on a car. We can also improve our wills, which is like stepping on the gas."
"How can we do that?"
"Combine discipline and focus. Make a sincere effort to improve the world or yourself. Like taking a walk the same time every day. Fasting is the best way I know."
After marveling at the other carnivores. I suggested warming up in the greenhouses, Val liked the plan. As we made our way there she said, "This is fun."
The botanical gardens were striking even in winter. We decided to return for the spring flowers. We enjoyed visiting the greenhouses, the marked contrast with the winter landscape. Our favorite was the tropical, warm and overgrown with exotic plants.
We liked the Natural History museum too, a labyrinth of rooms and displays. They kept it warm so we checked our coats in the gift shop, also craving hot chocolate.
Wandering around we enjoyed the exhibits. Amazed at the creative genius and diversity of nature. At the same time we decided we had enough, going for our coats.

As we left the gift shop an elderly couple approached. We had crossed paths earlier. Holding the door I said, "Hello again." I heard the word taxi and got an idea. Asking Val, "Would you mind if we gave that couple a ride home?"
She smiled, nodding it was fine.
In the shop I greeted them, "I heard the word taxi as you came in. We were just leaving, which way are you headed?"
We were going the same direction so I offered a ride. They looked surprised then smiled. We chatted as we drove to their house. They were wonderful, after a lifetime of love for each other. The gentleman was a retired engineer. He gave us a fascinating outline of his career.

After we dropped them off Val said, "That was awful nice of you."
I explained, "When I was little I was a Cub Scout. We were told to do a good deed every day. I was an innocent kid and took them quite seriously. I noticed immediately, an opportunity presented itself daily. I started paying attention and I've been doing it ever since. Shoveling Eve's driveway is a good example. A few minutes of enjoyable exercise for me, was a big help to her. Now we're friends, which is the best part of all."
"I'm glad you kept doing those good deeds, that's how we met."
I smiled and nodded my agreement, "There are thousands of them by now. All of them together are worth it, for that single one. Where would you like to eat?"
She said playfully, "Let's see if you can read my mind."
"Okay, imagine what you want. Smell it, taste it and paint a picture with your thoughts."
Val appeared to concentrate.
I suggested, "Fried chicken," looking at her for confirmation.
She nodded, "Can you read anyone's mind?"
"Yes, but I wouldn't do it without implicit permission. That would be like just walking into a stranger's house. But what is more important, misusing a spiritual gift is the quickest way to lose it.
There are a few exceptions though. If someone is talking, or even thinking about me. I'll pick it up, distance is not an issue. Or if someone is being deceitful or pretentious, I'll get all of it. I guess I should point something out. Everyone's thoughts and emotions are radiated, like a television station. To pick them up, all we have to do is turn on the receiver. If we connect to our true self, we can connect with anything. "
"Someday we're going to have a serious talk. Starting with, where did you learn all of this?"
I laughed, "Be careful what you wish for, wishes are in the habit of coming true."

There was a good diner on the way home. We enjoyed the friendly ambiance as we ate. In the car I suggested, "Don't stand on ceremony, nap on the way home if you like." She was ahead of me, soon

sleeping peacefully. We drove home in the fading light. The beautiful shades of sunset welcomed our arrival.
Val stirred, apologizing for falling asleep.
I smiled, "The only issue is that it was a little dangerous. Because I love to watch you sleep."
We got our second winds, deciding to sip wine and watch television. There was a photo of her and her sister when they were little. It was cute, they were dressed for Halloween. We talked about it and the other costumes she wore. I loved hearing her childhood stories.
She asked what costumes I had worn. She wanted to hear about my sister and I, going as each other.
I said, "We need to go have a puff for that one, and maybe another glass of wine."

As we enjoyed the night sky I told the tale, "That's when I was thirteen. My sister and I were invited to a Halloween party. Some well-to-do friends at school lived in a big waterfront house. They had a nice rec room and a patio down by the river.
You need to know, my sister and I took Halloween seriously. The year before, we won second prize in the City's Halloween parade. She was dressed as a gold miner, carrying a shovel over her shoulder. I had a full-body donkey costume. I didn't set any speed records. But I made it myself on the sewing machine, with a pattern from the fabric store. I walked bent over using handheld front legs. There was a paper-mache head with big eyes that moved. My sister was leading me with a rope, unless I escaped and went galloping around. I really worked the crowds lining the street. There were hundreds of entries, so second place was pretty good.

"We were trying to think up costumes for the party. It would be the talk of the school the next day, so we had to get it right. She had the idea we should dress as each other. I couldn't think of anything better, so we were trying to figure out what to wear. Then she got a big smile. She wanted to choose my costume and I could decide hers. 'Look before you leap', should have kicked in right about then. Because I had seen that smile before. My sister was running the idea past our mom.
She asked, 'You mean a bra and everything?'
There's that smile again. Sister started snickering, 'Of course, people might see his boobs otherwise.'
I hadn't thought that far ahead. I was wondering if that was such a good idea after all.
Mom said It was okay with her, then laughed some more.
I started thinking about what I had gotten myself into. But there was no way out but forward.

"My sister picked out a yellow dress with ruffles. There were also shoes, a bra, a purse and a wig. I took everything to my room and tried to put the dress on. But it was too small. I went and told my sister, she had to pick something bigger.
She snapped, 'You said I could choose your costume. Now you're just making excuses to chicken out.'
I conceded, 'I'll wear that one if you want. But it might rip and that will ruin everything.'
Then she had another wonderful idea, there's that smile again. She said, 'Wait in your room, I'll be right back.' After a while she returned, with her hands behind her back and a smirk on her face.
I asked, 'What?'
She was giggling and showed me a lace-up corset.
I said, 'No way!'
But she wouldn't budge, 'The deal was, I get to pick your costume. Besides, you're already wearing a bra.' So I put the corset on. She made me stretch up on my tiptoes, then tied it so tight I could hardly breathe.
She said, 'Now I think the dress will fit. So hurry up, because I still have to get dressed and do your makeup.' She left and I put on the dress, it was snug but I got it zipped. My sister came back, wearing the baseball uniform I picked for her. She told me, 'Get moving or we'll be late for the party.' We went to her room and she did my makeup. Then she added the wig and combed it like her hairstyle. She

was having just loads of fun.
Not impressed with my boobs, she rolled up leg warmers and stuffed them in my bra. Which stretched the dress to it's limits. Some jewelry and she was finally satisfied. She said, 'Alright, game time.'
We went downstairs for inspection. Our mom had a good laugh then asked, 'What, no nail polish?'
My sister yelled, 'I forgot the nail polish!' and ran upstairs.
Mom said, 'While she's doing that, I'll get the camera.'

"By then I was resigned to my fate, so I decided to have as much fun as possible. We had plenty at the party. It might have been that I was giddy, from not being able to breathe. I hammed it up, making fun of every feminine mannerism I knew. Everyone thought I was brave to wear that costume. They also liked that we dressed as each other. It was another one in the win column. The pictures went in the photo album, after Mom showed them to half the people on the planet." Val was laughing and I joined her.

We went inside to watch television. After a bit she snuggled closer, taking my hand and leading me to her room. We got undressed as we kissed and hugged. As we snuggled in bed I had a realization, a brand new life was just ahead. I knew we would make each other's dreams come true. A wave of joy swept over me.
Without intention I shifted into my emotional body, that was nothing new. What was unusual, Val came with me. We were no longer in our physical bodies. We were energetic beings in a realm of radiant colors.
Shortly after a marvelous thing happened. All of me was attracted to all of her, at a particle level. Each one of mine needed to find it's match in her. That built to an extreme sense of anticipation. Then like an electrical arc, we were interspersed within each other. An exquisite vibration started. We were merged into a single being, sharing that blissful feeling.
Val was in a trance, after a time a finger moved. I knew she wanted to return so I wound us down. As we drifted on a cloud of love, hidden memories were revealed.
She whispered, "Did you feel that too?"
I sent, "Yes," she got the message clearly.
Realizing I had not spoken she laughed softly, "Now I can read your mind too."

At breakfast she was reserved. I sent peace as she returned to her center. She asked, "How long have you been doing these things?"
"Since I was fourteen."
"Sometime we're going to have a serious talk."
"Isn't that what we're doing?"
"Can you do these things any time your want?"
I started laughing and could not stop. Finally saying, "The truth is, I'm usually trying to keep them from happening. I didn't do that on purpose last night. I guess I was involved though. I was thinking about how much I love you, which caused that to happen. Sometime we'll have a real talk and you'll know why I'm laughing. But I've never tried to share it before, last night was new territory for me." Adding with a smile, "I think we owe it to ourselves, to explore it further.
Let me answer you question though. If I realize a spiritual experience is possible. I might try to make it happen, if everything feels just right. When I first met my elephant friend. I immediately felt a deep love for him, that made our communion possible. What happened last night was possible because of my Love for you. There is nothing more sacred or powerful than unconditional Love. It's a direct path to the source of all things."
She asked, "Where did you learn all of this?"
I looked at her carefully, "To be perfectly honest, remembering would be a better word." Then added, "There have been many years of books, experience, loneliness, effort, pain and wonder. You know,

this drama we call life. The actual reason we're all here is to learn about Love. I know it seems overwhelming, the way I handle it is to laugh with joy."

Well knowing it was a lot to take in. I thought of something to help, "Did I see a guitar case in the closet?"

She nodded.

"Is it okay if I play it?"

Startled by the change of subject she said, "Of course."

I got the instrument and tuned it. As she did the dishes, I played and sang popular songs.

She asked, "You're very good, have you played professionally?"

"Yes, some club dates playing the flute."

She shook her head slowly, "I'm actually looking forward to work today. Maybe it will restore a sense of order to the universe."

I reflected, "Work is good, work is very good." Then with a smile, "Especially ironing."

She laughed, "Well then, I'll save it all for you." When she laughed, I knew she was okay.

I took her hands saying, "I love you," as I kissed each finger. "Ten kisses and now you know I'm leaving." Then we kissed as lovers.

I said, "I've got to go out of town next week, I'll call as soon as I get back." Finding out I would miss her birthday, I resolved to make amends.

She said, "I love you," for the first time. I glowed the whole trip home and some after.

CHAPTER 4 - NANCY

I got home from California on a Tuesday and was off until Monday. Surprising Val at work, "I see you have your car, so you don't need a ride home. I guess I'll be on my way."
She laughed, "I think you mean, on your way to the house to wait for me."
Being serious I told her how much I missed her. That I would wait to follow her home.

Once inside we kissed and hugged, catching up on things. I gave her a card, "I'm sorry I missed your birthday, but I hope to make it up tomorrow."
"It couldn't be helped. My sister made a cake and brought her corncob pipe. We had a swell time." Then giving me a wink, "It gave me a chance to tell her everything about you."
"Everything?"
"I told her I met someone wonderful, now she wants to meet you."
I laughed, "There's nothing like putting on the pressure, wonderful is quite a buildup. You should have told her I'm a knucklehead. Then maybe I could have broken even. Seriously though, I really want to meet her. Besides, I brought her something I hope she'll like."
"May I ask what?"
"It's a special little pipe to smoke weed. It doesn't let out any smoke, except what you exhale. I've got her something for that too. So she can avoid all the telltale odors."
"I've never heard of that before."
"I got them in California, they're way ahead of everyone when it comes to weed. I have a new kind that's very strong. I brought her some of that too, to see if she likes it."

While Val started dinner I laid out the plan. I had cashed my paycheck. Holding the envelope I said, "I'm calling this, Val's Birthday mad money. I want to take you shopping tomorrow if you feel like it."
With a hug and a kiss she said, "I feel like it." We chatted as we ate. I wanted to know about her sister, she wanted the meeting to be a surprise.
While I unwound doing the dishes. Val relaxed on the couch, sipping wine and watching television. When I finished I joined her. She said, "I want to try some of that California weed."

Val's back porch was a great place to smoke. The house was well sited for privacy, the hill dropped off for miles. There was an ever changing pastoral view. I said, "What I like about this stuff. You only have to smoke a tiny bit, instead of breathing in all of that smoke."
"I see what you mean, that's a good idea."
Enjoying the night air and twinkling stars. We used a smokeless pipe to sample the flowers. Val said, "Wow that stuff is strong." After a moment, "You know, I really like this little pipe. You could almost smoke inside with this."
"Good because I brought that one for you." She gave me a hug in thanks. Inside, the day caught up to us. She asked, "Would you be inclined to play guitar?" After a few songs we called it a night. Snuggling in bed and drifting off to sleep.

Waking to a superb day, we sipped tea and chatted. Val asked, "Where do you want to go shopping?"
"If you had some mad money, what would you buy?"
She said with a smile, "A new toaster."
"Good start, how about clothes?"
"I'm not sure you would have much fun, clothes shopping with me."
"First, today is about you having fun. Second, I would enjoy clothes shopping with you. I spent many hours when I was growing up, clothes shopping with my mom and sisters. I always took a few books along to pass the time." Holding the envelope I said, "Mad money rules clearly state, we can't come

home until this is gone. Do you promise?"
"Yes." We headed for the city in my car, so she could enjoy the scenery.

We browsed around in a women's clothes store. Val chose a few dresses, "Let me see which one of these I like the best."
As she tried them on she came out to show me. I smiled, "We can do this all day as far as I'm concerned."
Finishing she held up a dress, "I think I like this one."
"I liked all of them. We came all this way, so let's pillage like Vikings." Hanging them by the counter, telling the clerk we wanted them.
She smiled back, looking us over.
I whispered to Val, "I wonder if she would mind, if I went to the dressing room with you." As Val shopped for lingerie I looked at the nightgowns, two caught my fancy. Holding them up in turn, "Do you like either of these?"
"They're both beautiful, you pick."
"Okay," I agreed, keeping them both.
She said, "I think that's more than enough." As we checked out the clerk smiled some more.

Walking to the car I said, "That was a good start, but there's still a bit left. I believe mad money rules are in effect."
"I can't think of anything else."
"How about skirts, blouses and shoes?" We continued shopping at a department store. As she tried things on, I waited for her to model them. She was so beautiful and I loved her so much. When we were done with clothes, we picked out a toaster and checked out.
As we neared my car I spotted a flat tire, "That's my good deed." Looking back at the store, there was a woman with two children. I suggested, "Let's wait a second, this is her car." As she approached I motioned to the tire, "I would be glad to change that for you."
Her look of worry turned to a smile. Val chatted with her as I got the tools and spare. The children were curious and friendly, reminding me of my sister and I at that age.
I smiled at them, "You two will be driving soon, so you might have to do this someday. Let me teach you how." Giving them a show and tell on how to safely change a tire. As I finished the woman opened her purse. I shook my head, "I'm glad I was here to help. You can get awful dirty doing that, and be sure to get the flat fixed. Best of luck to all of you."
Walking away Val asked, "How did you know that was her car?"
"I get an intuition, I've gotten better at following them over the years."

In the car I suggested, "There's enough left for dinner at a nice restaurant, birthday girl's choice."
As we dined she said, "I believe this might be, the nicest shopping trip in history. Thank you very much."
"For me too, I enjoyed every minute." After a fine dinner we started for home, Val was soon sleeping peacefully. It was nice driving through the winter landscape, the trip seemed short. As we neared the house I touched her arm, "Almost home."
She smiled, stretching and yawning.
Inside I said, "I hope we don't get nabbed by the mad money police. But there's still a bit left, how about if I put it in the cookie jar?"
She smiled and gave me a loving kiss, "I'm tuckered out."
"Me too." We got ready for bed.
Going to sleep she kissed me, "Thank you very much for today, I love you."
With all of my heart I told her, "I love you too."

As we finished breakfast the phone rang, it was her sister Nancy. I gathered from one side of the

conversation, she was coming over at nine that morning. I asked what I could do until then, the yard cleanup idea sounded good. The winter day was bracing and the work was satisfying. Wondering about meeting her sister went nowhere. I decided to relax and let things unfold.

The front yard was done when a car came up the driveway. Nancy said, "Hi," as she looked me over. We introduced ourselves walking to the house. She greeted Val as only loving sisters can. We settled in the living room. Val told her about the shopping trip while Nancy sized me up. She was a bit wary, protective of her little sister.

Val mentioned I brought a present, that sparked Nancy's interest.

I got the package telling her, "This is some very strong weed, you only have to smoke a tiny bit. Bury this jar in your freezer and just take out a little at a time. It will keep better like that. It's vacuum packed, so you might need a bottle opener to lift the lid. Here are some things to make smoking more discrete. This pipe doesn't let smoke escape, this tube removes the odors as you exhale."

Her eyes got big, "Thank you very much, I really do appreciate it. I was a seamstress in a mill for fifteen years. Sewing really messed up my hands. I got another job finally, but the damage was done. Thank you again for everything."

Val smiled her approval, knowing I won her sister over. She suggested, "Nancy, do you want to try some of that good weed?"

"Yes, let's use the new pipe. My old corncob has about had it."

On the porch I said, "I'll pass on the advice I was given. Only a puff, then wait at least twenty minutes. I thought that was good advice, because this stuff is stronger than any I've ever had." I showed her how to fill the pipe and we all had a sample.

Back inside Val said, " I'll make some tea." Nancy and I chatted, she thanked me again for the gifts. Val returned with tea and cookies.

When the twenty minutes passed Nancy said, "I see what you mean about that stuff." Then giggling she suggested, "Maybe just one more puff." Out back I saw Nancy clenching and opening her hands. Noticing me watching she said, "Winter is the worst, I dread it more every year."

Sitting on the couch together, she lowered her defenses. Offering to warm her hands, I held the closest one between mine. Looking in her eyes to make the connection. My hands got a pleasant tingle, I passed the energy through hers. After a few minutes I did the other asking, "Are they warming up?"

"Yes they feel much better, that was very considerate. Do you know someone else with arthritis?"

I nodded, "Yes, my grandmother." Val was watching and wondering, I gave her my best innocent smile.

A few minutes later Nancy said, "That stuff actually helps with the pain. I don't think what I get from my son, does anything but distract me for a while."

After more conversation Nancy started her goodbyes. I offered, "Let me warm your hands again before you go."

While I was holding the second she said, "That wasn't the weed before, that was from you holding my hands."

"I've always had warm hands, it worked out well today."

I walked Nancy to her car, opening the door. After she got in she gave me a serious look, "I knew something was going on with Val. So I made her spill the beans. When she said she met somebody wonderful. I thought, 'Sure, I'll decide that for myself.' As far as I'm concerned, you're alright in my book."

Closing the door I said, "I'm glad I got to meet you, and I'm looking forward to seeing you again." She waved to Val on the porch, backing down the driveway.

Inside I joked, "Oh no, she hates me!"

"I don't think that could have gone any better."

"Is it okay if I cook dinner tonight?"
"That's a nice surprise, what are you going to cook?"
"Whatever you want. What would you have if we were going out for dinner?"
"There's a nice piece of fish in the freezer."
"I saw that, how about salmon and vegetables?"
"I like the sound of that, I thought you said you couldn't cook."
"I know how to boil stuff. I'll just throw everything in a pot and boil it for a while." Asking when she wanted to eat, I pointed out there was time for a nap.
She said, "You know, that sounds good. I'm not used to smoking weed in the morning."
I tucked her in with a kiss, "I'll wake you shortly before dinner."
After a stretch I took a walk. Exploring her neighborhood and enjoying the snowy wonderland. I liked winter as much as the other seasons, the refined energy from the ice crystals.

Invigorated I headed for the kitchen. Making salads, assembling the fish and vegetables, setting the table and selecting a wine. Washing the dishes as I went. Deciding on oatmeal cookies for dessert, I put the batter in the fridge to chill. It was great, cooking for someone else again.
There was time to spruce up. A shower and a shave, changing into nice clothes. Val was stirring as I finished. Sipping tea she said, "I thought that went very well with Nancy."
"Me too."
"You look nice, do I have time for a shower?"
"Certainly, take all the time you need."
Listening to her progress, I opened the wine and lit the candles. I turned to look, she was wearing one of her new dresses. I hugged and told her, "You are a vision of loveliness." Her perfume was heavenly.
After helping her with her chair, I poured the wine and served the salads. Taking the lid off the roasting pan, the aroma flooded the kitchen. I smiled, "That's such a good technique, because it can be put on hold for a while."
"I'm impressed. I suspected you knew how to cook, when you peeled those potatoes."

I nodded, "While I was in college. I worked in a restaurant three times longer, than going to classes. There was a scholarship, but I wanted to stay completely out of debt. They hired me as the dishwasher. But starting from the first night, I filled in for whoever called in sick or quit. I even waited tables. That is a very difficult job, but the money was good. If I didn't have classes the next day, I'd stay all night for the overtime. Baking and washing dishes until the sun came up. I was usually there by myself, so I turned it into a meditation. Now I like washing dishes."
"What kind of restaurant was it?"
"A big fancy place, the head chef was trained in France. He was pretty intense but we got along fine. Because he never had to say anything twice, and I could multi-task like nobody's business. He took a shine to me and taught me a lot about cooking. I even filled in for him on his nights off. On a busy night, there were at least a dozen of us in the kitchen.

"After I was there a little over a year. He got in a big fight with the owner and quit. The owner took it out on the other chef, so he quit too. It was a Friday night just before the holidays. We were packed and there was a long line waiting. It was pandemonium, I loved it. The owner was about to blow a gasket. I told him if he doubled my pay, I'd get everything sorted out. That was still way less than the chefs were making. He was at his wit's end and kind of went into overload. He said, 'Okay,' then told everyone I had the big hat. Which was just fine with them, because they sure didn't want it right then. Then he went in the office with a bottle of wine, and locked the door. It was a hectic night but I delivered the goods. To tell the truth, I really enjoyed the pressure.
The owner found another chef and I was his wingman. He kind of fudged at his interview, because he was really a pastry chef. He wanted to expand his resume and the money was better. We hit it off

and I got him up to speed. In return, he taught me the baking and pastry side of things. I can make eclairs that will float off your plate. I'll bake a loaf of oat and walnut bread, and bring it next time. There's no toast like fresh homemade bread.

"Here's something funny. Unless we were swamped, I did my homework while I was cooking. My physics professor asked what the red dots were. I told him it was spaghetti sauce." Val was laughing and I joined her.

As we dined I added, "There's something interesting about working in that restaurant. I realized that college was the theoretical side, and my job was the practical. That way I had balanced growth, which is very important. My job was considerably more thought provoking than college. You can never learn those social skills from books.

On weekend nights it was a nonstop, three-ring circus. There was quite a bit of drinking. Half the people were snockered by the time we closed. The patrons would not believe the things that went on in that restaurant. Cooking was the easy part, the assorted nonstop personal dramas are what kept me jumping."

She asked, "Like what?"

I laughed, "Okay, here's one that was memorable. We were in the middle of a big rush, and I was up to my butt in alligators. Someone came and got me and they were frantic. A waitress and a prep cook were being friendly in the walk-in freezer. Which was nothing to write home about. But she manged to raise the bar that night. By getting her bare bottom stuck to a frozen pipe. I got a bucket of warm water and melted her loose, but then it froze all over the floor. So we had to melt it with boiling water to mop it up. The whole time we were praying the owner didn't catch us. What was funny, I didn't think anything about it. It was just another night at the chow hall."

Val was laughing and I joined her.

As we ate she remarked, "This is very good. I think you'll be doing the cooking from now on."

"I really like yours better. I was just trying to give you a nice break on your day off."

As we finished she said, "That was nice what you did for Nancy. I know you took away the pain in her hands."

I said lightly, "I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about. I had warm hands and hers were cold. I think we'd make the perfect couple."

With mock severity she said, "You know after the other night, I can see through your nonsense."

I laughed, "I guess it's me, who needs to be careful what they think."

"Anyway, thank you for helping her."

I said, "I thought hot chocolate and cookies for dessert, a little later if that's okay?"

"I see you've already washed the dishes. That was supposed to be my job."

"Tonight your job is to relax in the living room. That reminds me, I brought some albums. Do you want to listen to music?"

"Music sounds good."

After bringing the records, I got the cookies baking and finished the dishes.

Val called from the living room, "Who is Georg Telemann?"

I went to the doorway, "He lived the same time as Bach and Handel. It was the early 1700's and they all knew each other. He lived in Hamburg, and wrote some of the finest Baroque wind music."

"Do you have a suggestion?"

"How about Marin Marais? He was a genius of the viola da gamba. If you like cello music you'll love it."

"That sounds good."

I asked, "Any interest in a puff first?"

"I was thinking the same thing."

I told her I had to get the cookies from the oven, then I would be right back.

The night air was wonderful, a tonic as usual. I held her from behind, watching the clouds drift across the moon. After putting on the Marais album I finished in the kitchen. Bringing a tray with warm cookies and hot chocolate. We snuggled on the couch, enjoying the beautiful music. When the album finished she whispered, "I'll be joining you in bed soon."

When she appeared I caught my breath. She walked seductively to the bed in sexy lingerie. Slipping under the sheets she whispered, "I want you to be on top tonight."

Having waited so long to find her, I was well past entranced. More than anything I wanted her to be fulfilled. A decade of yoga gave me control over my body. I had reasonable control over my energy systems. Most important was being in tune with her thoughts and feelings. I used all of that until I knew she was content.

After lying in peace for a bit she asked, "Do you want some hot chocolate?"

"That sounds good, I'll meet you in the kitchen."

We sipped cocoa, holding hands and looking in each other's eyes.

She smiled and said, "That was new territory for me."

"Was it too much?"

"No."

We finished our cocoa, retiring to the peaceful sleep that comes to lovers.

At breakfast I said, "I know you have to work today. I'd be glad to do the shopping if you want."

Val smiled, getting the list and cookie jar. Seeing the mad money she pulled everything out, "How much is here?"

I motioned to come over and sit on my lap. Hugging her I said, "I gave it to you for your birthday, with all of my love."

She kissed me saying, "Thank you."

As I put on my coat I said, "You know of course, when we are out together people know we are lovers. Since it's your neighborhood grocery I was going alone."

Val thought for a moment then dried her hands. Putting on her coat she said, "Let's cause a scandal."

On the way to the store I said, "Back in high school, the Latin Club had slave auctions to raise money. We wore togas and carried their books, or got their lunch. I'm off until Monday and I'm your slave until then. Cleaning, fixing, painting, whatever you want done."

"Are you serious, why don't you relax and enjoy the time off?"

"Physical work is like a grounding rod for me. It dissolves tension and gets me back to my center. That's a very important trick I learned when I was young. Doing things like that is how I unwind."

She joked, "Hmm a slave, anything I want. I'll have to think about that." We laughed.

It was fun grocery shopping together. We were both familiar with the drudgery of shopping alone. Driving home she decided what she wanted done, work on the basement.

I said, "Give me something else, because that won't take all day."

She laughed, "The attic, that would take a week."

At home I told her to forget everything, to just relax until time for work. She liked the plan, well aware of the nightly grind. I brought the groceries in and put everything away. Sorting out the kitchen from breakfast.

Val came to the doorway, "I'm going to rest my eyes for a few minutes."

"I was just coming in to suggest the same thing. What time should I wake you?"

As she slept I hit the basement. It only needed a tune-up so it was done shortly. Wanting fresh air and sunlight, I finished the yard work. Then kept her company as she had tea, getting into work mode. I walked her to her car and kissed her goodbye.

After she left I took a nap, feeling disoriented when I awoke. It was my first time alone in her house.

After tea I headed for the attic, a few hours later it was shipshape.
I called Val asking about dinner. We agreed on omelets so I prepped everything. Then watched TV until she came home. It was a novelty, I did not have one. Instead of watching television while growing up. I read books, lots of them on wide ranging topics. After ten years old they were classics or nonfiction, natural and applied sciences, biographies and history. Many were instructional, how to fix cars, appliances, equipment, construction and maintenance. Whatever was on my plate right then.

My sister was two years older, we learned to read together. That put me ahead of the curve. As the others in class read, "Fun With Dick and Jane". I was reading, "The Collected Works of Jack London". There was a parent-teacher conference in the fourth grade, something about inappropriate material. I turned in a report on Balzac's story, "A Passion In the Desert". I found a French Libertine anthology in the City library. I thought the nice kitty story was fairly mild, after de Sade's "Justine". As usual I worked my innocent kid routine. I was well into a double life by then, which turned out to be an important skill. There was a downside being ahead of the curve. I felt like a stranger in a strange land. Often lonely to the point of tears, unable to share my true interests with anyone.

Val was coming up the driveway, I went out to meet her. A bit drained from work she perked up once inside. I cooked the omelets as we made small talk. When we finished I said, "Come and check out the basement, it's marvy."
Val looked then gave me a hug, "Thank you very much, I like having my own slave."

Over breakfast I said, "I hit the attic like a buzz saw, so give me some more ideas."
"I can't think of anything else."
"There are a couple of shutters about to start rattling. How about if I fix those and wash the windows? But you might know something else you would rather have done."
"The windows really do need washing. I've been putting it off for too long."
"Sounds like a plan."
It was the same as the day before. Except after a nap I got the garage straightened out. Dinner was ready when my love got home. The atmosphere was well charged, Dvorak was on the record player. The intent was welcoming and relaxing, my restaurant days came in handy. It worked, she felt better once inside. After a long shift taking care of business. We unwound on the back porch. That special feeling was in the air, Spring was beating back Old Man Winter.

We had glasses of wine, snuggling on the couch. It was not long before she said, "I want to go to bed, and I want to do what you want."
I kissed her neck saying, "That sounds good to me. Let's go to your room, it'll be easier in the big bed." She looked at me curiously. I added, "Don't worry, this will be lots of fun. The first thing I want to do is drink some more wine, that might be helpful." I led her to her room asking, "What I want you said?"

I went to the guest room to get something from my suitcase. Holding it behind my back as I went in her room. Her eyes were wide with anticipation. I said, "When I was in California I was thinking about you. Then I had a brainstorm, get a good book about sex." I pulled it from behind my back with a flourish, "Voila. Although it scares me for some reason, I would like to look at it together. I think it might be good in the long run, but only if you want to."
She thought for a moment, "I've seen enough to trust your instincts."
I turned on the overhead light. Getting in bed I explained, "My idea was that we'd both give our honest opinions. No matter what the other said."
She smiled her agreement. We lay on our stomachs paging through the book, the extra glass of wine was kicking in. Turning the pages, we found out what we both might like to try. When we got done she said, "You know, I sure wasn't expecting this. But you were right, it was a very good idea." I

turned off the light and we held each other, drifting off to sleep.

CHAPTER 5 - THE PARK

In the morning I asked, "Do you want to go out for breakfast?" She liked the idea, we went to the local restaurant. I drove the Pontiac for the first time, it was peachy. Before we went inside I said, "Now it's game time for you. We'll be the number one topic on the grapevine, tongues will surely wag."

She laughed, "I honestly don't care."

We had a lovely breakfast in a wonderful classic diner. Val knew several people from working in the store. They were happy for her, she had been flying solo for a while.

There was a beautiful City park. As we left the diner I asked, "Would you like to feed the geese at the lake?" We stopped by the store for cat food. After finding a secluded bench, we were soon surrounded by excited geese. Eventually the food was gone, they all went off for a morning swim. Feeding the geese had opened a window. We were wound up, so was the park. I asked, "Would you like to try something?"

"What?"

Holding her hand I said, "At the zoo, we talked about the sea of energy we live in. Here is another piece of the puzzle. The energy responds to our thoughts, that's one of it's purposes. We'll get into all of that sometime, here's what I want to try now. I do this by myself all the time, but I've never tried to share it.

"Picture the sea of glittering particles around us, make them swirl clockwise. Create a tornado of light surrounding us both. Don't force it, the calmer the better. See it in your mind as the tornado spins faster and faster. Feel the tingling particles brushing against your skin. Stay detached and still your mind, breathe smooth and even."

We kept at it, after a few minutes we saw lights on the lake. Not reflections, brilliant tiny orbs dancing over the water. The effect was mesmerizing, Val squeezed my hand. Soon the air began to sparkle, a radiant golden dust. We were in a higher state, time slowed. Glowing colors appeared, surrounding everything.

After ten minutes I wound us down, the park returned to normal. Val asked softly, "Is that always there?"

"Yes, and a whole lot more."

"Why can't we always see it?"

"Vibrations. Believe it or not, we're all vibrating so fast we don't notice. What we did is an ancient technique, for speeding up our vibrations."

"What is all of that?"

"Do you want the short version, the science or the metaphysics?"

"All of it."

I laughed, "All of it would take a while, how about an introduction?"

"Yes."

"Then I need to ask a serious question."

"Of course."

"What you want to hear could change you. I would be glad to explain, but first you must do something. You must take responsibility for your question, by deliberately choosing this step."

She looked thoughtful then nodded.

"First some metaphysics. That experience became possible, when we combined the powerful subtle forces of purity, innocence and Love. That all sounds obscure but it isn't. Purity is a basic personal decision, well within anyone's grasp. The geese are innocent of the self-absorption, that comes with intelligence. And Love is all pervasive. So there are the big three, right out in plain sight.

Now for some celestial science. In our galaxy seven is a special number. It's used in many

fundamental ways. In other galaxies that could be a different number. I'm not sure of the implications. But existence there could be quite different because of that. Now let me tell another fairy tale that came true.

It was a nice spring day, so this person decided to plant a garden. They planned on seven beds with some working distance between them. They started their roto-tiller and got everything prepared. That was definitely enough for one day. The next day they planted seeds and watered them in. Then they sat and drank lemonade while nature took it's course. That person was only one of countless in that world. But if the truth be told, they are a few steps ahead of us. The garden they prepared was our solar system. The beds are the planets, and of course we are the seeds.

There are some things to know about the place they built their garden. It has nine spatial dimensions and is subdivided into seven levels. Each descending level has one less dimension, so the first has three. The physical level of the Milky Way galaxy. Physical matter requires at least three dimensions. There are one and two-dimensional realities, but let's save that for another time.

The levels are seven separate realms of existence. Each one is isolated from the others, because of extreme differences in density and frequency. That allows them to be intimately woven together, and interspersed within each other.

All of it is right here in front of us, right now. But we're only using our physical senses, so we only have the perceptions they provide. Sound and light waves, odor and taste molecules and physical touch. The interesting question becomes, how can we connect to those other senses?

"That's the sketch, now let's paint the canvas. Each level has seven states of matter, providing forty-nine states in our solar system. There are also seven primary forces provided by the sun, each is comprised of seven aspects. That gives the garden forty-nine motivating forces to make it flourish. Combined, those forces and states of matter are what we call nature.

The states of matter are like descending steps from a single well. As the water flows down the hill, it goes over waterfalls. Each one slows the water more and more. When it gets to the forty-ninth step, the raging torrent is a placid pool.

Sometimes curious rabbits peek through the fence. To see what looks tasty in the next level of the garden. We are the rabbits, and we just took a peek at the second level."

She smiled and nodded, "I'm curious about the forces. They would be the key to understanding nature."

"That is a very astute comment, you are right. The states of matter are just physics and chemistry. The forces are mysterious and infinite. They are the spiritual aspect, the matter is the manifest. So let's look at the forces.

First is dissolution, without an organizing force everything disintegrates. Certain chemical reactions fall in that group. Insects, fungi, bacteria and rodents are natural examples. The second force is mechanical in nature, things like thermodynamics, kinetics and wave propagation. Third is the force of attraction. Like attracts like, as above so below, gravity and things like that.

Fourth is balance, a natural tendency toward order, equalization, inertia and stability. Time is an aspect of balance. Fifth is vitality, the life force that builds, animates and sustains us. Increase, multiplication and the ripple effect are derived from vitality. Sixth is evolution, a force that causes everything to progress and advance.

Seventh is a force beyond description, so I call it Love. It's primary aspect is divine creativity, the spark of life. Another provides an intimate connection between all things. A third that's important is divine grace. As far as I know, there are no limits to Love's scope and authority.

"Here are some general things about the forces. All seven are vital to our existence. The concept of yin and yang, is the lower forces balanced against the higher. They are not isolated from each other. They constantly interact and blend to form countless effects. The best place to study the forces is nature. It reflects both their supreme power and their delicate nuances.

Using our wills, the forces can be combined in countless ways. Like colors on an artist's palette. So there are actually unlimited spiritual forces. Aspects of Love and balance form reciprocity, symbiosis and others. All aspects of Love are good with anything. The force of Love is very strong around Christmas, that's the best time to work with it. You can count on it because it's ordained. Beautiful spring days are the most powerful. But you have to be lucky to catch the moment.
Another worth discussing is the force of abundance. Love and vitality combined with free will. The secret is in sharing freely, that brings Love into play. Give and you will receive, then make sure you share that too. And the snowball gets bigger as it rolls down the hill.

"Now here are two thought provoking nuggets. The forces respond to our consciousness, because we have the divine authority of will. Our consciousness shapes our reality. The other thing is that Love can override all of the other forces, along with any of their rules. Which yields the astonishing conclusion, because of Love anything is possible.
Something fun to consider in this scheme. If we plant a vegetable garden, are we a god to the worms? Most assuredly, maybe even to our cat friend overseeing the project. But then again, cats are not easily impressed by our antics. Is that enough for today? I don't want to be more obnoxious than usual."
"No, keep going."

I joked, "You have a high tolerance for pain, so here are some more lashes. Do you know what Russian dolls are?"
She shook her head.
"It's a set of hollow painted dolls, nested inside each other. They can be separated in the middle to see the next one. All the way down to the smallest."
"Yes, I think I had a set."
"That is our true self, a series of seven nested bodies. Our physical body is the smallest. Each successive one increases in size and capability. The physical world compared to the next, is like a small city compared to the entire Earth. Each time it's the same as you move up.
You know about the physical world, I'm going to call that the first floor. The first floor is the realm of sensations. With layer on layer of illusion for good measure. We come here to feel blistering tropical noonday sun, and bitter cold arctic nights. The intensity of the sensations promotes growth. Facing adversity causes us to evolve. We are in a position to develop stupendous abilities and entirely new facets. By simply deciding to, then acting on those thoughts.
One thing that is unique to the first floor. It's the only one where we can meet others who are adversarial. There is one exception to that. If we are hostile ourselves, we'll end up in the conflict region of the astral. Because like attracts like. The higher you go, the more that comes into play.

"We need seven special bodies to experience the seven floors. Because they are all very different from each other. Each additional dimension completely rewrites the rule book. And the matter is more energized to an extreme degree.
Here are some related concepts. A point is a theoretical position in space. A line is a one-dimensional conception, formed by two points. A plane is a two-dimensional conception made from four lines. A cube is a three-dimensional object, made from six planes. There is a pattern emerging. The solids in each higher dimension, are formed by a set of solids from the previous dimension. And there are two more with each rung up the ladder. So the astral version of a cube is formed by eight, three-dimensional objects. In math that could be taken to infinity. But eleven dimensions is the practical limit for realities. Everything begins to fold back on itself. The premise of dimensions doesn't apply after that.
This means that the surfaces of astral objects are three-dimensional. You can see how that changes everything. Objects in the thought world are formed by four-dimensional objects, and so on up to the seventh floor. Where solids are defined by eight dimensional objects. We have come a long way

down the path. But consider what lies ahead because of things like that.

"In our current phase of existence, we're working hard to get our third bodies finished. All of our bodies are connected through signal and energy pathways. Let me list the seven bodies, then we'll talk about each one as we go.

The first one is our physical body, it actually has two parts. The one we can see and another that's more refined. The second body is the astral, which you already know about. The third is our thought body, it also has two aspects. A lower one that's recreated each time we're born, the upper one is semi-permanent. Until we finally leave Earth for new lessons on another planet. The permanent one has our complete Earth history, hundreds of millions of years. It's possible to use that resource, and learn considerably more about our true selves.

Our fourth body is a bridge between our three highest and the three lower. The upper three are spiritual, the lower three are manifest to varying degrees. Something that's interesting to know, our fourth body contains our complete histories. Everything, all the way back to when the garden was planted. That includes other forms of existence on other planets. The fourth floor also has enough perspective, to predict he future based on present trends.

I don't know anything about the fifth, six and seventh bodies, but here is another nugget. Our seven levels taken together, form the bottom floor of an even higher existence. And our seven bodies are actually sub-assemblies. They will eventually comprise one stupendous body, to live in that higher realm. Any questions?"

"Yes, where did you learn all of this?"

"When I was in college, I spent a lot of time in the library. It was big and deep, and I knew it was a golden opportunity. Have you ever heard of the language Sanskrit?"

She shook her head.

"It's an ancient dead language from India and Asia, thousands of years old. Surprisingly, English has a lot of similarities. The original Hindu and Buddhist texts are written with it. The translations are suspect so I learned to read Sanskrit. It seemed familiar and I caught on pretty quick. Then the doors to antiquity swung open.

Right after I started college, I was playing my flute in a park. There is a type of Indian music called ragas. They are variations in a given structure, somewhat like musical chants. A gentleman stopped to listen so we talked for a while. He mentioned his granddaughter wanted to play the flute. A very bright twelve year old named Keva. Also that he had an Indian restaurant, and I was welcome to play for tips. My good deed bell went off. So I agreed to play during lunch the next Sunday.

"Keva was a living doll. She sat right in front of the stage, watching with wide eyes. I still had my first flute. So when I finished playing I gave it to her, and offered to help her get started. She was a natural flute player. Within a month we were playing duets in the restaurant. We made a lot in tips because she was so cute. We also worked out a deal. She could keep my half, if she saved it for a better flute. Her parents helped and she got a very nice instrument. After a short time I suggested she work with a pro teacher. Someone who was connected in the musical community. Recitals, youth orchestras and other chances to shine. As a freshman, she won first chair in a big high school orchestra.

For Halloween we decided to wear traditional Indian clothes. Her mom made her an amazing outfit. We kept doing it because our tips doubled. In high school she started a classic Indian trio. With two adult friends of her father, a tabla and a sitar player. She had an ethereal tone in her playing that pushed everything over the top. They wore traditional clothes and were always booked solid. I got to sit in a few times, it was something else.

"Her grandfather was watching all of this and smiling. I knew there was more to him. As it turned out, he was a highly educated Hindu scholar. I was welcomed into the circle. He taught me Sanskrit and lent me many valuable texts. Even more important, he helped me understand the veiled references.

Many are written in a fairy tale style. He also gave me a list of other obscure works. The college library had some, others were available in West Coast libraries.
One large set of Hindu texts is called the 'Mahapuranas'. Which loosely means, 'Most Significant Ancient Knowledge'. It goes way back, over five thousand years. A few others went even further, clear back to Atlantis. Some were historical, some were spiritual.
That introduction, was a distillation of venerable books from India. I was also acquiring knowledge in a more direct way. But let's save that for another talk. It will tie into something else you might find interesting. Have you had enough for one day?"
"Nope."

I laughed and continued, "Then let's talk about the surroundings on these seven floors. A cornerstone of chemistry is that matter can't be destroyed. It only changes state from energy transactions. Each of the seven floors are constructed from seven states of matter. Each state has considerably more energy than the previous. It's impossible to take physical matter to a higher floor, because of a special barrier. But if you somehow could, the energetic levels would blast it into subatomic particles. The physical floor is the most dense, because it's built from the lowest seven states. The next floor up is the astral, with the next seven. The same thing all the way to the top, through five more floors.
The seven states on each floor are solids, liquids, gases, ethers, hyper-ethers, molecules and atoms. Let's look at water for an example. A drink of water started way at the top. Even before the highest state on the highest floor. At that point it is an immeasurably small, unthinkably complex energetic potential. A universal essence with unlimited power and possibilities. Because it's brimming with the universal forces. That essence is the source of everything in our universe. It has the inherent potential to form every possible type of matter.

"Those specks of potential just love to form bonds, and create atomic particles. As they do they give off energy, to become he first state of matter. Those atoms also love to form bonds. As they do they release more energy, dropping down to the second state as molecules. The basic building blocks of that particular floor. The different types of molecules are formed by various combinations of the forces. The molecules are material reflections of assorted force recipes. Under further influence of the universal forces, the molecules coalesce into highly dynamic matter. Since each type of matter was created by different combinations of forces. When it changes state, the energy released reflects that specific blend.
Here is a key to metaphysics. Because we can use our will to influence the forces, we can interact directly with matter. It's easy to convert etheric matter into a gas, by siphoning off energy. Some mediums routinely produce liquids, which I'm not recommending. Producing or modifying solids is also possible.

"Water is an exceptionally pure molecule. When the molecules clumped together, energy was released and it become hyper-etheric water on the seventh floor. Hyper-etheric matter is highly energized, the molecules are extremely dynamic. They flow in a harmonious fashion and can be harnessed with technology. Even physical hyper-ethers have unusual and useful properties. For example, like electricity can be used to induce magnetism. Hyper-ethers can be used to manipulate gravity, both attraction and repulsion. That's one of the propulsion systems for physical space vehicles.

"Let's slow our hyper-etheric water down, it will become good old-fashioned etheric water. With molecules just bouncing around at random. Now we're getting to something we can grasp. Because we use physical ethers all of the time. Arc welding and fluorescent lights for example.
Etheric matter still has enough energy, the electrons can flow around. If we slow our etheric water, the electrons will stick to the atoms. It becomes a gas, the seventh floor's version of steam. If we slow

that down we have water, and then ice. So now we're standing on the seventh floor holding an ice cube. A solid that started out as an energetic potential.
Chemical reactions, pressure changes, combustion and other natural processes will cause it to release energy. It will change state, continuing to descend the staircase of matter. Steam turns into water when thermal energy is released, a gas becomes a liquid. Reduce the temperature of that water and we finally get a tray of ice cubes.

"Now here's the fun part, the transition between floors. Let's look at astral to physical. As it lost energy through each step. Our water finally became an astral solid. Sooner or later that astral ice, will meet some fate of celestial chemistry. It will lose enough energy to be unsuited for that rarefied world. It will descend into the physical world as seventh state atoms.
We came from the top down, because that's the source of everything. Here's a way of looking at it from the bottom up. Physical subatomic particles are astral molecules. Astral subatomic particles are molecules in the next world, and so on up the line. This reveals something interesting. All of it is right here in front of us, right now. The reason we need seven different bodies. Each floor is unique in density, energy, atomic frequencies and many other ways. So we need a certain kind of body for each one.

"Our seven bodies give us abilities and freedom of expression. So we can experience that floor, and hopefully we'll learn something and grow. Each of the bodies is considerably different from the others. The all have special uses, abilities and senses, properly suited to their particular world. There's an interesting reason that is necessary. Each floor has an additional spatial dimension. We're sitting in a three-dimensional world, but the astral world is four-dimensional. That goes all the way up to a nine-dimensional seventh floor.
Again, these bodies are seven parts of one fantastic body. For us at this point, that is a work in progress. But we are moving inexorably toward that goal, due to the irresistible force of evolution. We will certainly leave this little nest called Earth, and others to follow. To eventually become full-fledged residents of our nine-dimensional universe.

"Our physical body is built from five states of physical mater. It can be usefully divided in two parts. They are intimately related and dependent on each other. One includes the three lowest states, solids, liquids and gases. That's the body we know and love. In the future I will call that our physical body, even though it's only the dense part.
A common name for the other is the etheric form. It's made from etheric and hyper-etheric physical matter. It is actually created first, before the physical one. Our bodies have trillions of cells, and they are all working in perfect concert. The etheric form is how that is accomplished. It provides the organizing pattern and the cohesive influences.

"Now here are some fun facts about our etheric forms. It links us up to our next real body, the astral. It radiates energy and makes a corona, an etheric aura. Some of what we just saw was etheric, some was astral. Clothes or even dirt, will impede etheric radiations. Liking or disliking someone is etheric. Being in love is from an exceptionally good match. But our etheric forms are always changing, so that can be ephemeral. Sex is a good example of fun with etheric forms.
It has assorted energy phase converters, which act like power couplings. One frequency goes in, a different one comes out. Those connect our etheric form to both our physical and astral bodies. All seven of our bodies are intimately connected, energetically and in all aspects of consciousness.
It's etheric when we know someone is behind us or watching us. Most animals are psychic because of powerful etheric forms. They need them as protection from the elements. There is a lot of etheric energy at the zoo because of that. That's also why we like to pet them. Being worn out is etheric, it behaves just like a battery. A good way to get a fast charge, is a brisk walk with sunlight and fresh air.

"You can actually see with your etheric form, but mine is gray and low resolution. Something else that's interesting, our senses are provided by our etheric forms. The sensation of a kiss is actually between our etheric lips, not our physical ones. Our physical nerves are only basic detectors of etheric perceptions. Our etheric form is constantly regenerating, just like our physical bodies.
Chemical reactions in our physical nerves, generate and conduct electrical currents. The matching etheric pathways conduct refined etheric energy. Our etheric forms are sensitive to impacts, temperature and noise. Also physical substances like chemicals, smoke and drugs. Electricity will cause the physical and etheric forms to separate. Enough current will separate them completely, that is typically fatal.

"Some use their etheric forms in ways they should not, trance mediums for example. It damages both the physical and etheric bodies. Hitting their thumb with a hammer would actually be preferable. Besides, there are much easier ways to communicate across the floors. But they require knowledge, effort and discipline. The first and most important piece of knowledge, is to run from all of that.
If they actually cared about a deceased relative. They would leave them alone, so they can focus on their tasks and interests. Would they want someone pestering them about some trivial nonsense. All of that business is just selfish and inconsiderate. There is one rare exception, when it's ordained by divine grace.

"The states of matter on each floor are similar in concept. But with each level their frequencies increase to an extreme degree. A solid astral object would be imperceptible to us. Because it's vibrating faster and is highly rarefied. But it would be solid as a rock using your astral senses. Because they're designed for those higher frequencies.
Each of the floors are quite substantial when you're on them. Even more so as you move up. The astral world makes the physical seem dreamlike. We are not our bodies, we are our consciousness. The higher we go the more expansive it becomes. If I say it seems more real, I mean we are more conscious. The extreme density of the physical world slows everything down, even our consciousness.

"Our physical senses can only register the three lowest states of matter. There are even many gases we can't detect. The lowest etheric frequencies are on the upper edge of our vision. In the right conditions they can be seen. Ghosts are a good example, on a dark misty night. Ghosts are the etheric forms of people who have passed on. They can have a residual echo of consciousness, that can make them seem alive.
On a dark foggy night, power-lines have bright etheric coronas. Others are Saint Elmo's Fire on ships and some types of streetlights. We can improve our ability to detect ethers, with practice and certain techniques.
If you take a liquid and energize it enough, it will become a gas. If you energize the gas enough, like with a lightning strike. It will become an ether. So now you'll know what I mean if I say etheric matter. It's the more highly energized state after the gaseous.

"Here is something else. Just like there are many types of solids, there are many kinds of ethers. We use an assortment of them to exist. Some esoteric schools have names and descriptions. As an example, we use one type to keep ourselves warm. Humans have a very precise operating temperature. It's considerably past optimistic, to think that food alone keeps us at nearly one hundred degrees. Especially outside in the middle of winter. The type of etheric particles we use the most, are charged with vitality. They provide our physical energy, that is also used for growth and healing.
Another kind is for manifestation, we create and sustain our world with it. With techniques and skill we can speed up the process. Given the right circumstances, almost instantly. It can transform physical matter too. Lead into gold for example, or water into wine. A fairly easy one is removing flaws from gemstones. Because you only have to copy the surrounding crystal matrix. Producing a

gem without that pattern is significantly more difficult.

"There's an ether with anti-gravity properties. Pets that don't want to be moved seem noticeably heavier. They are doing that willfully, using that type of ether. In some situations an excited loved one can seem very light. That ether lifts us while we are alive, we would be like slugs without it. That becomes evident if we ever have to carry a lifeless body. Skilled practitioners can use that ether, to physically lift themselves off the ground.

Animals have a natural awareness of their etheric forms, that humans generally speaking have lost. They can use them much better than people. Otherwise they would all freeze the first winter.

Those are a few examples, of the countless etheric phenomena in our lives. An important one to mention, is the type that allows us to perceive our surroundings. We use it mostly for sight, but also for touch, hearing, taste and smell. There are many other types of etheric matter. That topic is a whole science in itself.

"Our etheric form is slightly larger than our physical body. A perfect replica that looks like glowing mist. It can be used somewhat like a body in a limited fashion. Many paranormal events are related to the use of that etheric form. They are fairly easy to work with consciously.

The most refined part of our etheric form, is the energy pattern used to create our physical body. Our physical bodies are like shadows, cast by that etheric blueprint. Their internal structure is an intricate network of energy pathways. Most are near the surface, but the three most important ones go up our spine. They activate our central nervous system. The signal matrix that provides the monitoring and control of our bodies. There's one big one that runs along the center into our brains. The other two spiral around it and connect to our nose. They act like control coils to keep everything balanced. Among other things, they maintain our precise temperature. Breathing through one side of our nose is completely different than the other. One side will raise our temperature, the other will lower it. Our nose is our most direct connection to our energy systems. Using the proper breath patterns, unusual things are possible. Like deliberately keeping ourselves warm.

"Those surface energy pathways are called meridians. They are similar to blood vessels, they just channel a different medium. The gases we inhale are needed for physical processes. But what actually keeps us alive are those charged etheric particles. In India they call them prana, their advanced breath techniques are called pranayama. Those permit us to work directly with the vital and other etheric energies. With proficient use we can do all kinds of nifty things. That is some of the science and application behind metaphysics.

"The sun is similar to a step-down transformer. Channeling all of the life-giving energies in our solar system. Our etheric forms refine those forces further, into even more specialized energies. The types needed to sustain and operate our physical bodies. The etheric form collects the universal forces. Then through special power nodes, energizes our physical bodies. There are seventy-two thousand of those energy connections, between our physical and etheric forms. They are also similar to step-down transformers. By converting different types of etheric energy, into various physical requirements.

"The etheric form has other important functions. It protects us from countless external influences that might be harmful. It also links us to our next body, the astral. Which does the same to the next, and on up the line. There's something interesting and useful to know. We can improve our etheric forms, by improving our physical bodies. Through exercise, a better diet, good works, yoga, meditation and things like that. Unfortunately the reverse is also true. Overindulging in the assorted vices, lack of motivation and others can weaken or damage it. If we improve it sufficiently, the connections to our higher bodies become active. Then all kinds of interesting things become possible. Remembering what happens while we're sleeping for example.

"With regard to all of these bodies. There's a lot more going on as we live, than meets the eye. Although physical life seems straightforward, it most certainly is not. The extent of our creative abilities defies belief. Our persistent thoughts and desires actually take on lives of their own. Once they've been distributed to their appropriate realms.

Here's something for an example. An act of pure unselfish Love, always returns multiplied. This is the reason why. The extremely high frequencies involved, cause our higher bodies to evolve stupendous abilities. Their sweeping authority is even felt down here, as they reflect that selfless gesture.

The implications of all of this become clear, with just a glimpse of the higher floors. After that we'd say a thousand lifetimes would be worth it. At the end of the day we'll perfect all seven of our bodies. Then balance and integrate them into a single whole.

"Have you ever heard of someone who lost an arm in an accident, but could still feel their hand?"

"Yes, several people. But it was fingers, they worked at the mill with Nancy. They all say they can still feel their missing fingers."

"Cutting off their physical finger, did not affect their etheric finger. What they are feeling is their etheric finger. With some injuries, our etheric form will restore the missing tissue. That's how our bodies heal. The etheric form preserves the pattern, and provides the specific energies needed. Some animals can regrow an entire part, lizard tails for example."

Realization flooded Val's face, "This is amazing."

"All of it is right out in plain sight. We're so intently focused on our scramble to survive. We filter out things, not related to our immediate needs. That ingrained focus is very important to our survival.

"We take in considerably more etheric energy than we use. The excess flows out through our head, hands and feet. It even radiates through our skin, to protect us from countless biological threats. Our physical bodies would not last long without that critical protection.

Clothes, gloves or a pair of socks reduce the flow of ether slightly. We feel that as warmth. Different materials impede etheric radiations by different amounts. There are countless other etheric phenomena, everyone conveniently overlooks.

Our bodies are connected by a mysterious energetic pathway. It can extend or contract to any length. No matter how far we roam, it keeps us in touch with our physical bodies. That's how we know to get back, our bodies send us a message. Once that signal cable is broken or disconnected. That's it, that lifetime is done. Then our etheric and physical forms separate, and begin to disintegrate immediately."

I smiled and asked, "Questions?"

"What were the glowing colors we saw?"

"A number of things, first let's lay some groundwork. Everything is made from molecules, the basic building blocks of our world. The molecules are spinning and vibrating, which creates energetic radiations. Before the seventh state of matter, is an all pervasive universal potential. Even filling the vast distances between molecules. Their spinning and vibrating are powered by that potential. The various radiations are energetic byproducts. Simply put molecules glow, and you can see that with esoteric techniques.

Something even more obscure, atoms have consciousness. Therefore everything has at the very least, a primitive awareness. Rocks, snow, bolts, shoes, it's an interesting idea to ponder. The more complex the object, the greater the awareness. Cars are a good example. They have easily perceptible moods and feelings. A car always feels better after we wash and wax it. The entire world is alive, not just us critters.

"Now let's use some molecules to make a rock. Their interaction will create more radiations. Dissimilar molecules can create more. Ions are charged particles, they throw more logs on the fire.

So all of that is why the rocks were glowing.
I'm sure you noticed, the plants were brighter and seemed more alive. They contain metallic elements, plus moisture and carbon. The three components of a flashlight battery. The radiations flicker and dance, because fluids are circulating in each cell and throughout the plant. All of that creates an energetic aura.

"Same basic idea with animals, but take everything to a another level. For example, metals in our blood flowing through our carbon brains. Creates measurable electrical energy, that's the chemistry behind thought. All of our other processes create more radiations, because of molecular interaction.
Now for the other part. When we breathe, we inhale highly charged etheric particles. We only use some of that energy. So the rest is radiated and creates that glowing mist. The ones we do use, change state as we absorb their energy. Which produces more radiations. That's why animals are brighter than plants.
All of that together, means we emit a considerable amount of diverse energies. Now for the best part, put consciousness into the mix. Our thoughts and emotions are reflected in our radiations. Creating colors and patterns, even memories are displayed. Now we're getting into astral, let's save that for another time. So the next time I ask if you want the science, I bet you say no."
She laughed and I joined her.

We went home tingling, like you do after spiritual experiences. I said, "I already did the garage, so I think I'll blast off. Then you can relax until work. It'll be Monday all day for me tomorrow, after being gone for so long. Hopefully there weren't any major problems." I kissed her fingers saying, "I love you," ten times.
As I opened the front door she asked, "Nancy wants us to come over for dinner. What should I tell her? You'll have to meet her husband."
"Sounds like fun."
She gave me the details then added, "He's a good guy, but you won't melt him like you did Nancy."
I quipped, "I love a challenge. Tell you what, let's make a friendly bet. I can melt him in under a minute, in fact in under five seconds."
She laughed, "I'll take that bet, he was a soldier in the war." Val said she would call Nancy then let me know.

CHAPTER 6 - KING ARTHUR

The next Wednesday, I went to work early and got off early. Val was chipper as we prepared to leave for Nancy's. On the way I fretted, "I'm so nervous, what if Albert hates me?"
She laughed, "Then you'll lose our bet, and I won't ever let you forget."
Nancy was waiting on the porch, after heartfelt greetings we went inside. Al came from the kitchen as Val watched with anticipation.
I greeted him, "Hey there Albert, how have you been?"
Al smiled as we shook hands, "Nancy told me Val was bringing a friend, but I didn't know it was you." I looked at Val innocently, she shook her head and laughed.

Al was a machinist at the same factory where I worked. The machine shop control systems took a lot of care and feeding. I had already broken the ice at work. My grandfather had machine tools. I started metalworking in elementary school, during my go-cart phase. Al opened up when I made observations, only a machinist would notice. Being good at my job helped, we were all on the same team.
Al and I took beers out back to cook on the grill. Speculating on the latest scuttlebutt at work. The girls were in fine spirits when we came in with the tray. A good time was had by all.

In the car Val protested, "That wasn't fair, you never mentioned you already knew Al."
I laughed and parried, "I was hoping it was him. But if it had been someone else with that name. I would have crashed and burned."
We laughed, enjoying the ride home. She said, "I'm glad you didn't mention weed to Al. He doesn't cause a fuss because it helps Nancy. But it's illegal and he's old school. Speaking of Nancy, she wants to come over tomorrow. I hope it's okay, because I already told her yes."
"That's great, I'll warm her hands if she wants. We'll be going steady after a couple more times."
We snuggled on the couch, sipping wine and going out back for a puff. The northern lights were dazzling with colors not usually seen. As we watched Val squeezed my hand. We held each other in bed until we fell asleep.

When Nancy came over we had a puff and chatted. Having lunch she asked, "What did you do to my hands the other day? Warming them doesn't do that."
"I'll tell you but I must warn you, it might sound a little strange." Val smiled, topping our teacups.
I explained to Nancy, "I gathered energy from the atmosphere. Then using my hands like the terminals of a battery, I passed it through your hands. Sort of like electricity through a light bulb. I hope I didn't overdo it."
"That does sound strange. I would have said hogwash, if I hadn't felt it for myself."
I decided to jump into the deep end, "You were right to stop the cortisone shots. They just make everything worse. What do you know about arthritis?"
"It hurts, sometimes so much it really gets me down."
I looked at her carefully, "There are a few things that might help. Say for example, if you were open to some changes in your diet. Should I continue?"
Nancy smiled, nodding yes.
Val said, "Wait a minute, let me make some more tea. I want to hear this too."
Sipping tea I asked Nancy, "Let me back up a bit. What do you know about the lymph system?"
"I've heard that word, but I can't say I know what it is."
"Cells are like tiny pieces of huge three dimensional puzzles. We call those puzzles our bodies. If you want strange. We have trillions of cells and they are all working together perfectly. Think about that for a minute, how can that possibly happen?

"Every cell is a self-contained tiny creature, you are their supreme god. Each one adores and serves you to the best of their ability. They all get hungry and have to eat. They also create waste products and must eliminate them. So how do you think the cells get their food?"
Nancy thought for a moment, "From the blood."
"Yes, and how is the waste collected?"
She shrugged for me to continue.
"The bloodstream takes away the safe things. But our bodies are very particular about our blood. So the questionable things are collected by the lymph system. After the blood gets to the cells, most of the fluid returns through those vessels. But a small amount is used to flush out those other materials. That fluid is called lymph, and it has it's own network of return vessels.
The lymph goes through filters called nodes. They have special cells to break down the wastes. The lymph is returned to the blood after it's been sanitized, in order to close the fluid loop.

"Now that we've built a foundation, let's get back to arthritis. As we get older, the lymph filters get overloaded. One of the most common ways is from our dietary choices. Lifestyle plays a big part too. If you're active or inactive, or if you get some fresh air and sunlight.
Going for a walk might seem insignificant. But it's a very powerful tool for maintaining our health. Walking just one mile every day would be life changing. Thanks to the fresh air and increased circulation. So think about taking a nice walk now and then.

"Arthritis is a symptom of a clogged lymph system. When lymph circulation is restricted, it becomes acidic and then septic. It irritates the adjacent nerves and you feel that as pain. If things get worse, irritation turns to damage. Our bodies turn on themselves, trying to repair the affected areas.
Now here's something interesting that relates to this. A person that eats a very clean diet would test alkaline, a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables. Ideally we are alkaline, but that won't happen if we consume animal products. It is very important that we don't become too acidic. Just like with plants, our body chemistry will stop working properly. And it will lead to a wide variety of health issues.
Now let's get back to arthritis. Since joints are constriction points to lymph circulation, they often suffer the consequences. Why does one person have arthritis in their hands, and someone else in their knees? You put you hands through the ringer, doing commercial sewing. They already had a lot of wear and tear, so they were more susceptible to problems. Somebody that did a lot of lifting, their hips, back and knees.
Other things come into play, injuries for example. Everyone has had plenty, pinching your fingers in the car door, twisting your ankle, stubbing you toe. Let alone bicycle crashes, falling, car wrecks and the million other things. That misalignment can cause restrictions in the lymph system.
Now we've come full circle, because you asked what I did. The energy we shared circulated the lymph, and that helped with your pain."
Nancy nodded, "That all makes perfect sense."
"Do you want to continue now, or maybe let things sink in for a while."
"Please do continue."

"Okay we've got clogged filters, what can we do? If it was a car we would swap them out, of course that's not possible. But here's the good news. Our bodies have built in processes to clean all of their filters. The question becomes, what can we do to help those processes.
An easy one is a hot shower, just before you go to bed. A restful night's sleep is very important for health. Also make sure the bathroom is very warm. Take your time and let your pores open. Rub gently with a washcloth from head to toe. Then do it again if you have the time.
When our pores are open, our bodies flush out everything they can. The washcloth gets it off you and down the drain. So if you do wake up hurting, try the hot shower in a warm bathroom. Even though you won't want to get out of bed. Getting back to sleep will be well worth the trouble. That premise is behind the popularity of saunas. Giving the pores time to clean house is always good. Is

that enough for now? We could go over the diet part some other time."
"If you don't mind, I want to hear everything. Even if it takes all night." Laughing she added, "Al can cook his own supper."
I continued, "Then let's talk about improving this situation from a different angle. By reducing the amount of wastes being produced. When I was growing up, no one I knew gave any thought to the quality of their diet. It was pretty much, eat whatever you like. No one considered the nutritional value, or the byproducts produced by each food. Not even our family doctor, that should have been their first question and concern.

"Just like various fuels burn cleaner than others. Different foods produce different amounts and types of byproducts. Fresh fruit juice produces almost no waste. Meat and dairy the most, and it can become very septic. As an example, less dairy means less waste. Then we're moving in the right direction. I'll make a list of foods, from better to worse with respect to this. It will be your decision what to cut back on, or even eliminate from your diet.
Before you consider changing your diet. Let me say something that is very important. Say you decide to have some fresh fruit juice, and you haven't had any for a while. It will melt some of the wastes clogging those filters, which is good. But then the wastes will be circulating and causing discomfort. Until our body breaks them down or eliminates them. It would be understandable to think the juice caused the irritation, but the wastes are the culprits. Here's what I noticed. It's a different kind of discomfort, bearable and it passes shortly.
That brings up the point I wanted to make. It would be very bad, to have too much waste circulating at once. So the strategy to follow is baby steps. Resist the impulse to make radical changes. Instead move in the right direction, slowly but surely."

Nancy wanted something.
I asked, "What would you like to know?"
"Where in the world did you learn all of this?"
"I dug into it to help my grandmother, she called arthritis, 'King Arthur.' As to theory, a physiology book would explain the lymph system. There are also many books on natural diet. For practical application, I've picked up a lot from yoga and fasting."
"You mean not eating?"
"Yes, just water."
She pressed, "Do you mean for a whole day?"
"Sometimes longer."
"How long?"
"The longest were six weeks, but let me give a serious warning. I'm not recommending that you fast, other than possibly skipping a meal. Fasting is a powerful tool for eliminating wastes. Just like with shop tools. The more powerful the more dangerous, if used incorrectly."

Nancy's look said keep going.
I did, "The finish line is near, let me suggest one more important tip. You need to love your hands, your whole body in fact. You are presently fighting with your hands. You resent them for hurting and they don't like that. Because they're doing their very best to serve you faithfully. It's a misunderstanding that can be resolved. It would be of great benefit if you did.
Our bodies are a miraculous gift, and a precious opportunity to express our consciousness. We are on the same team, we are an integral part of each other. There needs to be peace in the camp. Love and mutual respect would be even better. The easiest way to start loving our bodies, is to learn about them. There are some very good physiology books. Not just pictures and technical stuff, an inspired human approach. If you want one just ask.

"I'll certainly give humanity credit for all of their inventions. But all of it throughout history, isn't equal

to one human body. We shouldn't just love our bodies, we should worship them. Organic vehicles of consciousness with amazing powers, resilience and adaptability. Everyday miracles, we're swimming in a sea of miracles called nature.

"When we are born we come without judgment. Everything just is and we stare in wonder. As we live we put filters in place, for protection and to define ourselves. But that comes at the high price of moving away from our true self. Moving away from innocence and purity. Some become permanently lost, when they move too far from their center. The reason this is important, innocence is needed for creative authority. Things that seem impossible, become easily possible.

Try this, find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Sit and relax, take your time. Then find that little girl that's still inside you. The one that saw a cloth bag filled with stuffing, as her best bear friend. She's in there, ask her to come out and play. Remember her, not just the events and surroundings. Your feelings and motivations, your desires and interests. The idea is a return to innocence, that will make this tip much more powerful. Do the best you can with that.

"Now sincerely imagine, one of your hands is a kitten. Caress it with all the love you would give to a precious kitten. After you do the other hand, kiss each one and tell them you love them. I would understand if you thought this was silly. But done with unconditional Love, it's the best thing of all. This talk began when you asked what I did. Now I can finally tell you, I showered your hands with Love.

Let me add one more thing and we'll give all of this a rest. Our lymph system is to our bodies, what the drain system is to a house. It's crucial they both function properly. Lymph circulation issues are the root of many health problems, as well as the aging process. You'll be helping all of them, not just arthritis."

Val gave me a knowing smile. We wrapped it up and I walked Nancy to her car. She rolled down the window, "We're going to talk again I hope. I want to know why you didn't starve to death, not eating for six weeks."

I laughed, "Sure, I'd be glad to tell the tale. Please say hello to Al for me."

We were wondering how to spend an evening. I suggested, "How about dinner and a movie?"

Val smiled, "That sounds like fun, I haven't been to the movies for a long time." We dressed in nice clothes. When I saw her I wanted to kiss her from head to toe, she was so beautiful.

Over dinner she asked, "What exactly do you do for a living?"

"It's called industrial automation. Let me lay out some manufacturing concepts. Standardized parts have been around since the Paul Revere days. The parts are nearly identical, within given tolerances. That helps with assembly, and especially with future repairs. Cars are a very good example, Ford and others took that into another dimension.

A factory takes raw materials or outsourced parts, and produces something useful. The profit game is played, by seeing how fast they can do that. One way to speed things up is automation. Instead of someone loading goods on a cart, then dragging it off somewhere. They have a conveyor belt with a speed control. One big manufacturing bottleneck is machining metal parts. It's very labor and time intensive, the block from a car engine for example. So they design a machine to bore all of the cylinders at once, automatically and with high precision.

"There can be hundreds of those automatic processes, even in a small factory. All of those operations will have to be coordinated, that's what I do. Using relays, sensors, timers, sequencers, electric valves, counters, speed control devices and other things along those lines. It's all mounted in rugged cabinets, then everything is connected with electrical conduits. Of course there are countless wires, switches and indicators.

The systems have basic decision making abilities. That's done using relay logic, the big cabinets have hundreds inside. Each one gives a true or false, on multiple isolated contacts. Used in groups

they can follow binary instruction sets, with several layers of logic. The wiring is convoluted in the extreme.

"It's very engaging, especially when something goes wrong. Because the complexity creates endless possible problems. Figuring out what's wrong is sometimes a nightmare. That's why I like it, it's always satisfying to solve a tough problem. The pressure's always on, because disruptions in productivity cut into profit. And you know how the office dwellers feel about that.
The best part for me is that no two days are the same. It's also a good place to hone a wide variety of industrial skills. Which is one of my central life goals. So that's how I make the big bucks. It's a good match and I enjoy most of it. Sometimes I've got to wear a suit and tie and go to meetings. But I always try to make the best of things. I think of it as a play, and try to make my character relevant and useful.

"Now here's the usual fun part, that no one else knows. The real reason I like that job, is because I have to use intuition under pressure. I have to stop thinking and Know, usually in less than ideal settings. Troubleshooting a complex technical system can be very time consuming. After lightning strikes and power disruptions, there can be several major issues. Which complicates things greatly.
The approach I use is to study everything carefully. Then think about it and consider the various possibilities. Then I stop thinking and let intuition kick in. It's kind of a spiritual experience, each time I get better and it gets easier. No one at work knows any of this. I make a concerted effort to stay off the radar. So did that help or just muddy the water?"
She smiled and said, "Yes that did help, thank you. But after that, I think I'll stick to running the store."

It was wonderful holding hands at the theater. To finally have someone to share the experience. Movies had always been a favorite indulgence, to escape into the film for a time. Sitting by myself hundreds of times in theaters filled with couples. I wiped my tears of happiness discretely. But Val noticed and held my hand tighter.

On the way home she asked, "Where did you first try marijuana?"
I laughed thinking back to that night, "Do you know what a recorder is, the musical instrument?"
She nodded and smiled.
"I got one for Christmas when I was seven, and it really got under my skin. That's when I learned to read music. I liked playing scales for some reason. I had a big music book that was nothing but scales. I went out in the woods to practice and picked it up pretty quick. I could play anything just by hearing it once.
That led to a year of flute lessons in elementary school, with the usual recitals and concerts. I played a nice solo in the school Christmas pageant. At some point I put that down and picked up a baseball bat.
A few years later I started doing yoga and meditating. There were some other things going on too. I was listening to the Mozart flute concertos. So I decided to dig mine out of my bedroom closet. Unlike when I was younger, I had excellent instrumental facility. There was no barrier between my thoughts and playing, just like whistling. I liked that it was small too, and I could carry it around in a backpack. That's also when I started playing piano and guitar.

"In college I had been listening to jazz flute. It really had me thinking differently about the instrument. I was playing on a bench at sunset and a fellow sat down. We made the introductions, he was studying piano in the music program. He asked if I wanted to play together. We did, in a practice room in the music building. We had a lot of fun wandering through jazz progressions. When we needed a break, we went outside for some air. He lit up a reefer and passed it to me."
I laughed, "Everybody remembers their first time. Back then most people didn't know about weed. It

was pretty much only musicians, we called it gage.

"You asked if I played professionally, there were some club dates with him. I thought seriously about going in that direction, but engineering won out. I wanted to have my cake and eat it too. I thought it would be easier to be an engineer, and play music on the side. Compared to the other way around.
I fasted and did some big picture, soul searching. Despite wanting to pursue music professionally. Building my industrial skills was an important part of my life goals. There was something else that clinched the deal. Music is one of the ways I practice Love, so I didn't want money involved.
I get to play the flute now and then with musical friends, and sometimes an organ or a piano. I'd have a piano in my apartment, but it might disturb others. I practice the flute in parks, or in my car if it's raining."
She smiled and said, "I would like to hear you play sometime."
"Sure that sounds good, how about this one? I've got a friend named Tony who's getting married pretty soon. He wants my guitarist friend and me to play some duets. It'll be a big church wedding with a nice reception. Would you like to attend that?"
"Yes, that does sound good. Tell me when so I can get the night off."
"There's just one little thing. I've always been a lone wolf and they don't know about you. They all gave up matchmaking a long time ago. Some of them think I prefer men, since I don't chase skirts. When I show up with a babe on my arm, we will definitely be an item. Are you okay with all that?"
"Are you?"
"Yes, and I know we went to the diner. But a wedding date is another thing altogether. I want it to be your decision."
She thought for a moment, "I am okay with that, more than okay."
At home, a puff and glasses of wine were in order. Soon after we were cozy in bed. I fell asleep smiling, thinking about holding hands at the movies.

At breakfast we were enjoying each other's company. She asked, "That was fun at the park, can you do that anytime?"
"Usually, sometimes it happens on it's own. But that was the first time I tried to share it. I thought it might work, because we are harmonically compatible to an exceptional degree. Our energetic profiles are book-matched, we resonate with each other. It's the result of many shared lifetimes.
I honestly just went there to feed the geese. Sometimes the stars line up and extraordinary things become possible. Love, pure motives and the innocence of the geese, were all powerful forces. Combined they raised our vibrations enough, we could perceive the astral frequencies. Sometime we need to talk about all of that.
Do you remember that night after we went to the zoo?"
She had a smile, "That's one night I won't forget, religions have been started on less."
I laughed and explained, "Love raised our vibrations and we shifted into our astral bodies. Let's make some time to talk next week. Now what can I do to help before I take off?"
"Say I love you ten times."
I was comfortable being at Val's house alone. I told her I would come over the next Tuesday night. So she could look forward to dinner waiting.

CHAPTER 7 - STARRY NIGHTS

The next week Val was tired when she got home. I made a simple dinner, I knew she enjoyed coming home to a nice meal. We sat on the back porch, having a puff and watching the stars. Then unwound on the couch listening to Chopin nocturnes. Holding hands, drifting deep into the music. Soon we were asleep.

Over breakfast I asked, "Are you in the mood for a talk."
She smiled.
"We could go to the park, the atmosphere there would be helpful."
Sitting on our favorite bench I began, "When I was five I was alone in the backyard, looking at the teeter-totter. I tried to balance it by sitting in the middle. I was able to do that, then also while I was standing. It really intrigued me, I did it for at least an hour. After that I thought constantly about balance. How tight to tie my shoes, how much salt to put on my food. I saw it in everything and everywhere, it became a core aspect of my thoughts. I've told you a few stories from my childhood, but I haven't told the most important one. It would not make sense without some background information. Let's fix that so I can tell you the story. There's a lot I want to cover. So let me blast through it, then we'll discuss everything later.
You asked where I learned all of this. I got it from two sources, books and experience. Yoga caught my interest when I was a teen. I ran across a book at a bookstore, and I liked the geometric pattern on the cover. I was curious so I bought it. It showed how to do the poses, and talked about meditation and diet. There were also some spiritual principles and guidelines for living. So I taught myself in the basement. I already had weights and an old wrestling mat.

"It seemed familiar and I was up to speed pretty quick. I felt much better within a few days, so I stuck with it. One thing led to another and I dug deeper into the matter. There was one thing though, I was already somewhat removed from my family. Yoga shifted things even further, until there was little common ground.
The experience part was from astral adventures. I'll tell you how that got started later. But first let's talk about two other things. We went over our etheric form pretty well. So now let's talk about our astral bodies. When we saw the astral frequencies here. We connected to our astral sight, by deliberately increasing our vibrations. The technique used will and universal forces. Your basic fun with metaphysics in the park.
You got an astral introduction the night we went to the zoo. Everything we did there raised our vibrations. That's why I suggested it as an outing. Sending Love to the animals, being in the museum and the greenhouses. Later we put joy into the mix. All of those powerful forces caused us to shift into our astral bodies. That experience was the astral version of sex. So you know from personal experience, you can move your consciousness into your astral body. Or into the higher ones for that matter. Although that becomes significantly more and more difficult.

"Astral means starry, as in starry nights. You saw how glittering and bright everything was. One important thing is that the astral has four dimensions. I don't have a clue how that works, but it changes everything. For us to experience a four-dimensional world properly. We'll need a whole new set of senses. The third floor has five dimensions, again more sophisticated senses are needed. With each step up, the perceptions we had are greatly improved. And there are new ones that are even more powerful.
Our eyes are designed for use in a three-dimensional world. The senses needed for four dimensions are more complex. So let's talk about our astral senses. Just like here, the main one is sight. In truth, hearing, touch, taste and smell don't apply. Because there are no sound waves or flavor molecules. But the astral world is a very subjective place. We can blend emotions into those sensations. Thanks

to our experiences in the physical world. The ability to see sounds, or hear colors for examples. I've smelled astral flowers and tasted apples. I hear music, voices and natural sounds. Let's call that one astral vision, even though you get the other things.
Thanks to four dimensions, astral vision lets you see inside things. Similar to x-rays only much better. You can also zoom in or out to a considerable degree. The one that's confusing, is that you can see in any direction. Sometimes it seems like you're looking in more than one. There are various other novel features. The astral version of hearing is telepathy, it provides communication with other beings. Not just a conversation, extensive information or experiences can be shared. The astral sense like touch, gives the ability to learn about things. You can just touch an object and know it's complete history.

"When our consciousness is in our physical body, our astral body is perfectly merged. It's powered by the force of vitality through energy centers. It radiates energy and creates an aura, like our etheric form. It reminds me of the field around a magnet. But there's a thin film, to constrain the energy into an egg shape. It usually extends beyond our body a foot or two. My friend at the zoo has a huge aura from working with the animals. We were inside it while we were chatting. That's why things took on a surreal tone.
Here's some fun astral aura stuff. They are constantly in motion, flickering and changing as they reflect our emotions. We can intentionally expand our auras, but only for a limited time. I did it here to help raise your vibrations. The radiations are glowing colors, and they form meaningful patterns and shapes. There can be dull spots and distortions, which is not desirable. Health problems are also evident. A person is an open book from their aura, nothing is hidden. A weird thing is that our thoughts and memories, are projected onto the outer film. People think they are hiding things, not hardly. A bad aura will make you shudder, a good one is spellbinding and beautiful.

"Here's something else that's very important. All of these bodies are working together, all of the time. Our emotions are reflections, to and from our astral bodies. Our ideas are a dialogue with our thought bodies. Selfless service is direct interaction with our higher bodies. Now this is where it gets complicated. Those bodies are also interacting with other beings, just like we do here. They acquire knowledge and experiences we pick up to varying degrees. Sometimes it doesn't make sense, because of the different rule book we use. That's how the airplane was developed, by people working in isolation all over the world. They collaborated on a higher level.
There is something interesting to consider. This conversation is actually between our thought bodies. We are receiving it indirectly through our physical brains. Which act like the transmitter and receiver in a radio set. On the same topic, the memories acquired by each body are different. Our physical memories are the sensations and activities, our astral memories are emotions and desires. Intellectual pursuits are stored in our thought bodies. Nostalgia is a good example of tapping into an astral memory. "
Val remarked, "This is amazing, why doesn't everyone know this?"
I laughed, "They will, where we're all headed is beyond belief. And compared to how long we've been cavorting around this planet, very soon.

"Something else. You are not learning this, you're remembering. It would be more difficult to learn and I would proceed with baby steps. Instead of the long strides we've been taking. Let me reinforce that. You have already jumped over the Western religions, or a lifetime membership in a secret society. Another talk or two and you'll be in select company. You'll know who you are, what you're doing and why. Instead of bobbing around at the mercy of the elements. You can pick your destination, plot a course and set sail.
I wasn't kidding that it's all simple. In a short time in the course of human history. Children will know all of this and live accordingly. Knowing full well, there are consequences to the way they conduct themselves." I stopped and smiled, "Good question, remembering from where?"

Val smiled, realizing she had not spoken.
"You are remembering from a life we shared in an Asian monastery. It was a mystery school, we were Masters of the arcane sciences."
"Was I a man?"
"Yes, we both were. We never had sex, or even kissed anyone for that matter. We recirculated that energy to sustain ourselves. We had exceptional control over our energy systems. We slept on stone floors high up in the mountains. We also ate simply and lived very disciplined lives.
However, we routinely did extraordinary things. Several of us would sit in a circle. By using simple techniques, we all left our bodies and roamed the universe together. The Elders taught the younger ones, acting as tour guides. We traveled to wherever we pleased, exploring wondrous places. In certain cases we communed with the residents. Some of them were exotic in the extreme. Contacting an elephant is simple, compared to the diverse neighbors in our galaxy.

"Some other things from the monastery. We sent copies of ourselves anywhere. We used them to walk down the street or talk with others. They wouldn't know we were thousands of miles away, meditating in a stone cell. All of that would seem miraculous, if someone didn't know the science behind it. An airplane is only ingenuity and applied science. But take it back a thousand years, and they would start a religion.
I was over two hundred when I left that life, some Elders were much older. You were nearly one hundred when I was born, and lived some time after I left. Your appearance was a middle-aged man, on the younger side. You asked where you were remembering from, it was from that life.
Here's something fun, I knew bits and pieces about the monastery. But I didn't know who you were, when we first met. I found out after the astral episode." I kissed her cheek, "Which means of course, astral sex is your friend. Here's something else fun. I've never told anyone about any of this. Despite that, my nickname with my friends is 'the Monk'. It started because of the bare look of my apartment. There's no furniture in my living room, so I have more room for yoga and taichi. Then the name stuck because I didn't socialize romantically.
At one point I discovered how to recall past lives. Since then it's been an interactive research project. Something else is interesting. You taught me all of these things and much more. Now I'm helping you remember, the balance is being restored."
Val asked, "Did you learn all of this on your own?"
"Yes, but there were unusual circumstances. I hope it will all make sense after I tell the story."
She smiled.

I continued, "The second thing I wanted to talk about is very interesting. Then we can get on with our story. Hopefully it will answer the politely unspoken questions, you have had since we met. Digging deeper into yoga. I learned about a stupendous power inside everyone, an aspect of the primary force of evolution. The first book I read called it kundalini, which means 'coiled snake'. There are different names in different cultures. But they're all talking about the same thing. Also If I happen to say snake, I mean kundalini.
Sometime look closely at a medical symbol. That's an ancient drawing of the awakened kundalini force. You will notice a snake's head. The center column and the two spirals are those energy conduits along our spines. The wings represent the activation of powerful energy centers. In a manner of speaking, they allow us to fly to great heights.

"This force is slightly active in everyone. But for practical purposes, it's dormant at the bottom tip of our spines. Some very courageous people found, that force could be awakened. There are branches of yoga dedicated to that. At the monastery it was taught to select students in their late teens. But it's all fraught with peril. It also takes years of discipline and self-purification. There is a good reason behind their quest. Things that seem miraculous come into the realm of possibilities. Creative and intellectual abilities are also increased. The reason a dramatic improvement is possible. We typically

only use a small fraction of our potential.
Our physical bodies link up energetically with the higher ones. The snake powers up the energy centers to make that happen. We become a whole person, that's how we're supposed to be. In the future it will be so, and humanity will be quite different from now. Just as we are different from our caveman days. Shivering in the rain and gnawing on raw meat."

Val raised her eyebrows.
I asked, "What?"
"How did they do it?"
"There are an assortment of ways. But first let's talk about the occurrence. The intensity and length of the awakening is based on several things. The degree of development of our higher bodies, and which ones come into play. The amount of energy channeled varies greatly too. From a pleasant tingle to completely overwhelmed. The effects can be permanent or temporary. Based on the person's physical body, their character and their spiritual progress. Activating the kundalini force is easy. Compared to attaining the level of purity that makes it safe and permanent. We have to resolve our inner conflicts and pursue a high degree of health. There's also a significant price to be paid in effort, emotion and relentless introspection.
Here are some different ways to awaken our evolutionary force. There is an alignment between all seven of our bodies, located at the bottom tip of our spines. An impact in that exact spot, can have a profound effect. Ritual dancing can cause a mild awakening, that's what whirling dervishes are after. Exotic compounds can trigger a temporary experience. A touch or even a look from a Master works too, like jump starting another car. Yoga techniques exploit our energy systems. Using prescribed breath patterns, postures and muscular control. Visualizations and detached focus are also involved.
Intense religious devotion works, also the continued practice of detachment. Chants, ritual drumming and fasts are used in some cultures. Another method is music. Especially wind instruments, because of the prolonged breath control. Key ingredients to success are purity and balance within ourselves.
Something else that's important. The closer we can get to perfect balance, the greater the possibilities within our grasp. If we could somehow balance all of our aspects. We would ascend to the highest levels immediately.

"We are microbes in a tornado, compared to the primary force of evolution. The agent that causes everything to become more complex, organized and concentrated. Both in the short term, and over spans of time that are unthinkable. The divine plan is an evolutionary path for all things. Minerals are evolving to their highest states, precious metals then crystals. Plants are doing the same. From one-celled algae, to trees that are perceptibly aware. Then to their highest forms, the herbs. Animals are evolving to their highest forms, mammals. Elephants and bottlenose dolphins are good examples. People are doing the same.
In all of those cases, there is a sacred matter-spirit fusion. We are an intricate merger between our immortal selves, and these physical vehicles. During the experience we as eternal spirits evolve. Which means we expand ourselves and develop entirely new facets.
There's a program of seven steps through each kingdom. We start out experiencing the most basic forms. Then advance through a series of bodies that are increasingly complex. The bodies also evolve due to our energetic presence, but let's save that for later.
Now for the stupendous part. First let me quote a sacred book titled 'The Kabbalah'. It's a collection of ancient Judaic spiritual knowledge, compiled during the middle ages. The quote is intriguing, 'A stone becomes a plant, the plant a beast, the beast a man, the man a spirit, the spirit a god.'
Here's what that means. These increasingly complex energetic beings, will eventually cross an evolutionary threshold. At that point they'll have entry level status in a higher kingdom. That is certainly a momentous step because of the eternities involved. That pivotal event can happen in three ways.
Let's look at three elephants. After countless lives as animals, they are highly developed emotionally.

They have also begun to develop intelligence. They're nearly ready to graduate from one school. Then start at the very beginning in another.

"One way to advance is from incremental progress. The first elephant is born in India. He works graciously for his human friend, and is treated with heartfelt love. That loving relationship over many years, will cause the elephant to progress rapidly. He's living a sacred life of service.
Psychic shock is another way that advance can happen. That's the undesirable way, and unfortunately it happens fairly often. The second elephant is born in Africa and grows into a magnificent creature. Then he's shot and killed, only for his tusks. Despite the ignorance of the hunters, he knows exactly what happened and why. Imagine our resentment. If advanced beings from another planet, came and slaughtered us for our fingernails.
The people involved will lose some of their hard won progress. Nothing is ever lost in nature. That extremely potent energy goes to the elephant. He may advance because of a crime against nature, a crime against Love. As you might imagine, that could lead to problems.

"Then there's the desirable way to make that evolutionary leap. Through Love or self-sacrifice. A good example would be our friend at the zoo. Interacting with humans is greatly stimulating his intelligence. That and the voluntary sacrifice he is making with his life, may qualify him for graduation. He will finish his lessons in the animal kingdom, the kingdom of emotions. Then start another climb that can take eons, in the kingdom of intelligence.
Let's start a few steps down with minerals. They eventually develop a primitive consciousness, a basic awareness. That will qualify it for a leap into the plant kingdom. Primitive plants are little more than animate crystals. The advanced ones are approaching animal status. The plants build on that basic awareness to the point of basic emotions.
Then they move into the animal kingdom. Where they develop those emotions into basic intelligence. Something called individualization happens around then, thought is a prerequisite.
We started our evolution in the mineral kingdom, on a different planet. But our awareness was diffused and mingled with many others. We weren't just one rock, we were part of a mountain.
As we rocks were exposed to the universal forces. The energy caused our latent potential to unfold. Our basic general awareness began to consolidate, becoming more organized and compressed. A few billion years later we finally made it to crystals. Consider the difference in purity and consolidation, between sandstone, granite and a ruby.

"Then we relocated to a different planet for the plant curriculum. 'A stone becomes a plant.' We started out as one-celled types and finally made it to the herbs. Like with minerals we were very scattered. Not just experiencing one plant, the whole meadow. Everything we experienced during that eternity. Caused us to become more complex, organized and consolidated.
'The plant becomes a beast.' Again we moved to another planet to work through the animal kingdom. Not experiencing a single animal. Vaguely and generally sensing many of a particular type. Eventually we made it to the top, mammals. That's when thought starts developing in earnest. The definition of mammals doesn't include the most important one, thought. Mammals are intelligent, anyone with a dear pet will verify that. You know for a personal fact, Noni is a thinking creature.
At that point we were approaching the biggest milestone in our long evolution. Becoming an independent consciousness. It is a profound spiritual event involving the supreme force of Love.

"Let's consider an advanced wild horse. It's awareness is concentrated within a small herd. Then something happens that will change everything. It's captured then broken, so someone can ride it.
From then on it will be around a higher form of life. That will cause it's shared consciousness, to compress and focus into that one body. After several eternities, it finally becomes individualized. Each one is cause for great celebration by the gardeners. In this way a divine law is fulfilled, the higher helps the lower. Just as they were once helped to become independent beings. Having a pet is

a sacred commission, a powerful lesson in unconditional Love.
At that point the horse is considered sentient. Now he's galloping toward another evolutionary milestone. A move into the realm of intelligence, where people are members. 'The beast becomes a man.'
As intelligence evolves. There will be the stirrings of intuition, direct understanding. That's built on a firm foundation of thought processes, on top of a thick layer of emotions. After we're done with our current task on Earth, building our thought bodies. We will relocate to another planet for the intuition program. To develop and perfect our fourth bodies. 'The man becomes a spirit.'
That is just another stepping stone to an even higher level. Where, 'The spirit becomes a god.'

"All of this has been propelled by the divine force of evolution. Kundalini is a localized aspect, refined and distributed by the Sun. Can I answer any questions?"
"Tell me more about being animals."
"We experienced countless lives as animals. Starting out with very basic types, and finishing with kinds that could be taken as human ancestors. That took place on another planet, it is so ancient now it's disintegrating. We call our old home, 'the Moon'. We created fantastic amounts of emotional energy there. That residual energy still has powerful effects on our animal underpinnings. That was an unthinkably long time ago by our reckoning. Think in terms of billions of years for these things."
Val smiled and nodded.

CHAPTER 8 - NO GUTS, NO GLORY

I began, "I wanted to tell you about an incident, one that had profound and irrevocable effects. Hopefully it will bring everything I've said today into focus. On a beautiful winter day when I was fourteen. A bunch of us kids from the neighborhood were sled riding. We had built a long steep toboggan run, winding down through the woods from a hilltop. Then we packed snow into a ramp at the bottom, hoping to jump over the creek. Of course we iced everything down for good measure.

Having always been from the 'no guts, no glory' camp. I tested it out, sitting on a small toboggan. I was really moving when I hit the ramp, and I flew at least thirty feet. But when I hit the ground, I slammed down hard on my tailbone. In a few seconds I skipped the decade of disciplined preparation. A blow to the tip of my spine, and the snake was awake.

At the time I knew nothing about any of this, I discovered these things years later. Basically, take an infant and throw it in the deep end.

"That evening my bottom was sore, and there was a strange pulsing feeling. It was hard to act normal at the supper table. I actually felt like I was bouncing up and down, even though I wasn't. It had me worried quite a bit. Because it was something different from anything I had ever felt. Something very powerful and fundamental. I think that was the most afraid I've ever been, it had my complete attention.

That night was very agitated and strange. I was asleep and awake at the same time. It seemed like I lived a month in one night. In the morning I was curled up and couldn't straighten out. I had to go to the bathroom, so I flopped onto the floor and crawled there. I missed school that day, for the first time since early grade school.

The house started stirring. My sister checked in, because I wasn't getting ready for school. I told her why so she got my mom. My sister watched my sled riding stunt. She wasn't surprised when I told them my bottom was sore. We discussed going to the doctor. I suggested we wait, to see if things were better by the next day. I had my fair share of bumps and bruises growing up.

"Dad was gone to work and my sisters left on the school bus. Mom had a shopping trip planned with a friend. By midmorning I was alone in the house. I was tired of being curled up so I tried to straighten out, I wanted to lie on my back. Once I did that I felt better, my bottom didn't hurt as much. Then I decided to sit up and read, with my back against the headboard. When I did that my bottom stopped hurting.

After a few minutes the pulsing at the tip of my spine got stronger. Although I felt strangely paralyzed. A weird feeling started moving up my spine. I can see why they call it the snake. It's a column of energy so powerful, it actually feels physical. As it moved up, it activated different energy centers. Strange things happened with each one. Bright colored lights were flashing in my head. Somehow even more intense than actual spotlights. And I clearly heard a roaring sound, like high winds make. It was so real I wondered if a tornado was coming.

"I was afraid, but somehow passive and detached. Like I was watching myself from another level. The further it moved up, the wilder things got. When it rose into my head, I left my body consciously for the first time. I was hovering near the ceiling. Staring down at that strange body on the bed below. It looked like a mannequin, like it was fake.

The room got misty and indistinct. Everything started glowing, getting brighter and brighter. New colors started showing up which dazzled me. Eventually it was all glittering colored rays, gorgeous beyond description. The roaring had changed to a beautiful natural music. As if the wind could sing, but a whole choir. That went on for a long time.

"Then I was back in my body, looking around slowly. My bottom was sore but I could move. I could

see normally, but I also saw colors around everything. I was hearing things too, almost voices sometimes. Like when you hear a conversation from another room.
All of that was small potatoes, compared to that morning when I couldn't move. I decided to get up and shake it off. What else could I do? But go about my business and attend to my life. I also knew something very important, I had to keep it all to myself. It was way beyond doctors, or even sharing with my best friend. I knew society frowns on anything out of the ordinary. As difficult as it was to face things alone. I may have been institutionalized otherwise.

"Before that, I was a little isolated from reading so much. After that I was removed from society, as far away as the moon. You are the first person I've ever told any of this. If I hadn't found you, no one would have ever known. I'd have come and gone without a whisper to anyone. And I am absolutely certain, many have done just that.
My mom came home. She was glowing too, except much brighter and more complex. There were different layers and things that made no sense. I heard what she was thinking too, and that was very difficult. I had to grow up overnight, because my illusions about everyone were shattered. Everything was stripped down to a stark reality.
The next day I moved from my well appointed bedroom, to the back of our unfinished basement. Because I got straight 'A's and had a job at an orchard. My parents wrote it off as a phase.

"I cannot overstate what a difficult time that was. I had to work hard constantly, just trying to keep my sanity. I was literally taking it one breath at a time, day after day. It was exhausting and frightening.
I'd wake up in the night and the blankets would be thoroughly drenched. As if you had poured a bucket of water on the bed. I would change them, and a few hours later the same thing. I cried uncontrollably, nonstop for hours at a time. Racking sobs that left me exhausted. It just came over me at random times, thank goodness it never happened at school.
Sometimes my everyday reality turned into a dream. In school I stood up to go to the blackboard. Something shifted, and I was teetering on the edge of a deep canyon. I was terrified and froze, so the whole class was staring at me. Not knowing what else to do, I stepped off into thin air. As my foot moved down, everything shrank back to normal. Spatial distortion was common, I had four-dimensional perceptions in a three-dimensional world.

"The teacher stopped talking in class one day, so I looked up. Everyone was staring at me. There was visible light streaming from my fingers. A friend told me later, my face was sparkling. You can imagine how that spread around the school. I walked clear around the outside of the building, just to avoid crowded halls.
Something else that was really weird, it seemed like everyone was asleep. Going about their business normally, but fast asleep. It really bothered me until I got used to it. Sometimes high school was very strange. Everyone was asleep and their thoughts were visible.
I knew what everyone was thinking. If that sounds like fun it definitely was not. It was like a radio with several stations at once, but I didn't know how to tune it out. That wasn't the bad part. What they were thinking was much worse, the conniving, the spitefulness, the jealousy, the nonstop lies.
I gave up on the girlfriend idea because of that, and it made me very sad. It was the last straw, I just couldn't take any more. One night I was standing on a stool in the garage, with a rope around my neck. I came very close to ending it all.

"Another student was bullying me in gym class, one of the big football players. I got angry and gave him a searing look. He collapsed to the ground like he had been shot. That really scared me, I thought I had seriously injured him. But he got up after a few minutes, and I never got angry again. The coach and everyone else were staring at me, like I was a Martian. I was left alone after that and was somewhat of an outcast.
Until then my sister and I were best friends, we always had each other's backs. She started getting

static from her classmates about her weird brother. She was at a crossroads. Care about her lifelong friend or worry about teen gossip. She wanted to be one of the 'in' crowd, so she threw me under the bus.
She kept her same face with me. What she didn't know. When she talked about me behind my back, I heard every word. It really hurt my feelings each time. I had other friends but not the same as her. That started a rift that grew wider over time.

"But it wasn't all bad, good things happened too. The football player ended up sitting next to me in algebra. His doctor wrote off the gym incident as low blood sugar. He wasn't doing very well in class, so he was worried about failing. Which meant he would be off the team because of school policy. I offered to help him and he picked it up okay. He just needed to take notes and pay attention in class. He passed and we became good friends.
That led to helping others in math and science, I had a knack for simplifying complex subjects. My best friend in college was a neighbor I tutored in calculus. His Managerial Economics degree was about to go down the drain. Someone told him I was in the engineering program, so he asked me for help. He pulled out a 'B'. Then it was smooth sailing, because he liked the business classes. In return he taught me how to surf, which is very fun and addictive.
There were a few close friends in high school. We played neighborhood sports and had plenty of adventures. I was also working twenty-five hours a week. To tell the truth I was beyond high school. I did my time and stayed in the background. I should also mention, I had some very interesting and life-changing experiences. I wished more than anything I could share them with someone.

"My good deeds kicked into high gear. I've saved countless animals, caught in fences, drowning, tangled in netting, injured, down in sewers, up in trees. Some I took home to recover. A few died, which was very distressing. I learned I could absorb their suffering. There's never something for nothing in nature. I feel like I've been injured in the same way to an extent. But I can dissipate the pain, I consider it a small price to pay.
I've discovered numerous small fires that would have been catastrophic. In apartment buildings, office buildings and out in the woods. I've saved kids from drowning, and grabbed some from being run over by cars. Something else had changed, I was immune to the cold. I walked in the snow with tennis shoes, wearing shorts and a T-shirt. One of the reasons I considered moving here, was an affinity for cold winters.
I was walking home from a friend's house after midnight. Down a country highway, without a house in sight. It was below zero in the middle of winter. By then my intuition was better. I followed it up on a snowbank, and saved a man who was passed out drunk. I found a woman in her nineties, lost in the woods because of dementia. There have been many others along those lines. Where some small effort on my part, had serious implications for others. Every time I consider myself fortunate to be involved.

"There have been countless flat tires and broken down cars. Do you remember I had the tools to change your battery? I told you I had changed lots of them, I wasn't kidding about the lots.
When I left my apartment that night, I had a spare battery in my trunk. After the movie a couple's car wouldn't start. Their battery was an antique so I installed my spare. I bought two the morning I changed yours, the other is in my trunk. I sure wouldn't want to hear on the news. The people from the movies froze to death, because of a car battery.
Here's something interesting. Of all of the car problems, I have fixed every one. I know what's wrong by just touching the car. If I need a tool or a part, I find exactly what I need in their trunk or elsewhere. I quickly realized I was manifesting them. Creating them with my desire, almost instantly.
I was walking along a road and found a special tool in the weeds. It was the exact one I needed, to fix a car further along. I found rare esoteric books in our little corner drugstore, mixed in with the romance novels. A friend and I were heading home after the movies. We walked past a diner and it

really smelled good. It made us hungry, but we didn't have any money left. A block further I spotted a five dollar bill in the weeds. We ate like kings and left a big tip. I could fill books with similar incidents. Something else I realized, everyone is manifesting constantly with their thoughts and desires. I had just started doing it much faster."

I started laughing, "One night during a blizzard, an angel needed a ride home. You asked why I was out. With the impulse to see a movie, came the intuition someone would need help. Car trouble during a winter storm can be deadly. I thought the couple at the movies was my good deed. But sometimes there are more than one a day. When they drove off, I got a stronger tug. It led me to the store, that's why I asked about your car.

"A few miles behind our house was a large State reservoir and conservation area. I'd feel a compulsion to slip out at night and go deep into the woods. I should have been afraid but I wasn't. The air was self-illuminated and radiant colors surrounded everything. The night insects and frogs, were like thousands of monks chanting sacred wisdom. The trees were pillars in a majestic cathedral, with the night sky for a ceiling.

I wandered in ecstatic trance for hours. As dawn approached I'd slip back down to the basement. Back to my life as a young teen. I'd shower and change clothes. Then eat breakfast with my sisters and catch the bus for school.

I learned some interesting things while I was doing that. For example Earth is a living creature, an immense space being. She's aware of everything on her, with supreme Love she's nurturing all of us. She is the incarnation of patience, self-sacrifice and Love. Earth is living a sacred life of service. There was something I found interesting. Despite her immensity, she envies us somewhat because of where we are headed.

Another thing I learned, there are spirit creatures who take care of plants. I met several different kinds. They are the source of the lore about fairies and elves. I found out some trees are aware, and we can benefit being near certain types. There are more things we can discuss some other time.

"Something that helped was the hard work at the orchard, it centered and grounded me. The physical branch of yoga helped, a series of poses that balance your body. Changes in diet helped a lot, like just eating fruit for a while. I was glad I discovered that trick. Whistling helped, I whistled constantly as a deliberate therapy.

My body had been making some drastic changes, that eventually smoothed out some. Things like extreme hot flashes, my whole body aching, temporary lack of energy, weird shooting pains or tingles. An upset stomach was common, I had to be very careful what I ate and when. I had strange cravings like cucumbers or cantaloupe. At the orchard I ate several big peaches or apples, one right after another. I don't know where they went because I was thin as a rail.

I felt energy moving around inside, like it was actually physical. Flowing up and down my arms and legs, or in a circle around my head. Compared to most people I lived a very disciplined life. As far as diet, sleep schedule and recreational activities. Even what I read or thought about, I also had to keep a strict rein on my emotions.

The worst times were the mood swings. The highs were fun but the lows were awful. Suicidal depressions for weeks, it was very difficult. I focused on my breathing and tried to stay detached.

"Things got better gradually. After about a year, I didn't feel like I was over a pit of madness. I got accustomed to my new existence and learned the ground rules. A positive thing, I can read as fast as I turn the pages. When I say read, I can recite the book later. If I only want the main concepts, I just touch the book for a few seconds. That came in handy in college, now too. I can look at table sized schematics, with tiny symbols and complex logic. And assimilate the whole thing in minutes.

When I went to California it was another technical assist. They had a problem they couldn't solve, the worst kind an intermittent one. The morning I got there we spread out several schematics. There were places on some that were lit up for me. Like tiny flashlights were shining on certain spots. Three

technicians had been at it for a week with no progress. I knew the problem in minutes. I led them to it gradually until one of them found it. I did it that way for a reason. There may have been professional friction, if the samrtass kid solved it in minutes. That way we remained as colleagues and friends.

"For me, the best part of an eidetic memory is music. You can focus completely on the performance. I also think it looks better without the music stand. Another good thing, I've got thousands of tunes on tap. It's rare there isn't something for the situation. Of course that also helps with requests.

When I took a test in school, the correct answers were highlighted. I resisted the temptation to show off. Because I had the tests done, before the teacher finished handing them out. I had always read the book though, since it only took a few minutes.
I got a perfect score on a college placement exam. That resulted in another parent-teacher conference in the principal's office. Their stance was, the only way I could have done that was by cheating. It was my own fault. Instead of staying off the radar, I decided to see how fast I could do the tests. Instead of the allotted time for each section, it was less than ten minutes. That included another run-through to double check everything. It would have been a couple minutes, except for filling in all those circles with a pencil. That's why they were suspicious.

"The principal worked his usual, threatening bully approach. I couldn't help myself and started laughing, that didn't go over too well. He assured me my situation was very serious. I laughed even more, because I had a different ruler for serious by then.
I asked, 'What was my score?' He told me and I said, 'There is a problem then, because I didn't miss any questions.'
He said, 'That is a perfect score. So how do you know you didn't miss any questions?'
'Although it will sound egotistical. Because you ask directly, I'm going to tell you the honest truth. It seemed like a placement test for kindergarten. There could have been three times as many questions. And I still would have aced it in the allotted time. More questions than that, except for filling in the circles. I'll tell you the honest truth about something else. Of all of the questions, there was not one that wasn't painfully obvious. Even if someone did have the answers. They couldn't complete the tests in ten minutes. Because of the time required to look back and forth.'
I got up and picked out a book from his bookcase, then opened it to a random page. After glancing at it, I handed it to him and started reciting the page. They were both looking at the book.
I said, 'Now do you get the picture? We can do math tricks if you want. Because I can do any math in my head, much faster than you can write the numbers. There is something else. If you look at my records, you will see nothing but 'A's clear back to first grade.'
They conceded reluctantly, still implying the fracas was my fault. Then they started scheming. How they could make themselves look good by showing me off. And taking credit for things they knew nothing about.
My mom was watching all of this dumbfounded. She didn't know about any of that until then. I had another round of notoriety after that. Because the other kids saw me turn the tests in early, then the trip to the principal's office.

"Except with you and music, that was my last attempt to share my true self. Since then I've made a concerted effort to blend in. There's a reason I'm mentioning this. The exceptional score wasn't of the slightest interest to my parents. It was a crossroad for our relationships. More hurt feelings and rifts that continued to widen. That was the most important part of that episode, when all was said and done. Because I knew I had to leave and never look back. But don't get me wrong. It wasn't a bad thing, it was a very good thing. I knew I had something important to do, a sacred quest. And if I succeeded, I would end up somewhere I fit in.

"Something positive was music, that went through the roof. When I told you about rediscovering the

flute, I said there were other things going on. Now you know what I meant. For an example, my oldest sister was getting married. I was playing the piano by then, things like social gatherings and school plays. I had just won a talent contest with a Brahms scherzo. So Mom asked if I wanted to play the organ at the wedding. It was one of those big pipe organs.

Although I had never been near one. I said, 'Sure, but I'll need to practice on it.' I loved that thing by the way, an elegant beast of a machine that could sing. There are a number of stacked keyboards called manuals. There's also a long bank of pedals, laid out like a keyboard. You play the bass line using both feet. I had reviewed the music at home on the piano.

I could have played the ceremony after five minutes. Sampling all of the voices and getting to know the pedals, is what took so long. You can't see them while you're playing, it's all muscle memory.

The performance was flawless. But I'll be first to admit, the traditional wedding marches are not very difficult. Many of our classmates came to the wedding. While the adults were at the reception, I played popular music. People started filtering back in, including my homeroom teacher and several others. I loved that pipe organ and have played others since."

Val was listening intently. I said, "I think that ought to be more than enough for now." She started laughing and could not stop. I joined her saying, "You just relieved my fears of overloading you. You knew instinctively, what it took me years to figure out. The best way to deal with all of this, is to laugh with wonder and joy. To sing and play music, and best of all to practice Love. One morning you were disoriented, understandably so. You went from a three-dimensional reality to one with four. Then back to three, all with unbroken consciousness. I got the guitar to help you get smoothed out, and it worked."

I asked, "Do you think you've ever been in your astral body, before you met me?"

She shrugged and raised her eyebrows.

"I guarantee you have thousands of times, everyone has. As we sleep and our etheric form charges our physical body. We slip out in our astral body and live another life. Not remembering is part of the divine plan. We came here to focus on certain things. The nightly adventures would be a big distraction. It's possible to retain normal consciousness through the transition. You know that from the night we went to the zoo. At some point everyone recovers all of those memories, a lifetime's worth."

We got up and stretched. She smiled and said, "Now that was a talk."

"Would you like to walk around the lake, then eat at the diner?"

She nodded.

I told her, "I love you Valerie." We hugged and kissed, then strolled around the lake.

It felt like I was walking above the sidewalk. I asked, "Do you feel like you're a little out of your body?"

"Yes, and it feels funny. Like there's a layer of sponge on the sidewalk."

I laughed, "Welcome to my world, here's another good lesson. When we got to the park, our bodies were balanced with each other. The scope of our talk caused our thought bodies to expand. Now they are a little out of alignment. Here's the important lesson. This walk will help realign our bodies, being close to the water is also good. See if you don't feel better by the time we get all the way around."

It was beginning to warm up, after months of winter it felt good. As we neared the car I asked, "Do you still feel like you're misaligned?"

She smiled.

I said, "Walks are your friends."

CHAPTER 9 - A BOOK FOR MY MOTHER

I went to pick up Val for Tony's wedding. It was a Thursday night, so it worked out well with her job. She had her hair done and wore one of her new dresses, what a knockout.
I wore a dapper performance tux, my hair was long enough for a ponytail. That was rare for a man back then, outside of music or academic circles. It was usually tied back and tucked in my shirt, I wore it down for performances. She gave me a quick trim to even things up.
I had acquired another flute, a conservatory level instrument. It was lightly used with new pads, the head joint was exceptional. The lip plate is the critical part of a flute's tone and response. I took it in the house to warm up.
I had a guitarist friend named Mark, we played duets now and then. Our part in the wedding was the music as the guests arrived. I had risked my immortal soul, doing jazz arrangements of Bach. I laid one on Val as she sat on the back porch. She liked it, she had never heard solo flute. A final costume check and off we went.

On the way I asked, "Do you want to try what we did at the park? I've got a real good feeling about tonight."
"What's the plan?"
I laughed, "The usual plan, no plan. I'm playing until the ceremony starts, then we'll snuggle in a pew. Pick one at the back toward the outside, so our smooching isn't a big distraction."
As we pulled into the parking lot, I knew my good deed was in the church. I assumed it was the performance. Mark's panel van was way in the back, he had converted it into a camper. It was called "The Sin Bin", which was not far from the truth.

When I introduced Val he gave me a look. Laughing to himself, "Bye-bye Monk, hello Dirty Dog." I had given him a smokeless pipe. He asked, "You wanna get right for the wedding?"
I laughed and took a rain-check. He usually played popular music with a band. They smoked weed before, during and after performances. I gave him a new jar, in thanks for helping with the wedding.
He had a very nice Martin acoustic guitar. The intonation was excellent, all the way up the fret board. I was sensitive to musical pitch. We tuned and warmed up. Going through our set list and getting on the same page. Val was smiling and enjoying the scene. I smiled back, happy she was having fun. We headed inside.

Val was ushered to a seat, Mark and I setup at the front of the chapel. He was seated and I stood. I liked the freedom of standing while playing the flute. It allowed for more intensity and expression. We played Classical duets as the guests were seated. A Vivaldi "Four Seasons" transcription, and other lively pieces. The atmosphere was friendly and positive.
Looking around while we played, I spotted my actual good deed. There was a woman next to Val, my guess was late seventies. She had a bright spiritual glow, from walking the walk her entire life.

We wrapped it up as the pastor entered, handing it off to the organist. Smiles are the applause at a wedding. We smiled back and left the performance area. Mark had to leave for something, I thanked him and saw him to the door. Then sat between Val and the woman with a polite greeting. I found out her name was Freida. There were people on the other side, they moved to sit with friends. That is where the fun began.
Although Freida was a widow, her husband always came to church with her. They had done that through thick and thin over a lifetime. I did not notice him at first. When he willed the other people to move, I felt the ripple from his world to ours. He wanted to sit by his wife and hold her hand.

My good deed was helping her connect with him. Usually I would not work with spirits when I was

physical. I knew that was the special exception of divine grace. As the ceremony began I took Val's hand. Then smiled at Freida, offering my other. She knew the drill, smiling back and taking my hand. She was a very spiritual person. Between her and Val my energy went through the roof.
Val was on board, I was almost sparkling from playing the flute. Freida's husband was helping from the other side. Between the four of us, that good deed was well in the bank. I do not know what happened between Freida and her husband. It was sacred and I stayed way out of it. Tears ran down her cheeks during the ceremony. One thing I did know, they were not from that wedding. They were from her own, all those decades ago.
There was something else, she would not need help in the future. The energetic link with her husband would always be available. From the intensity of our cooperative effort. After the ceremony we all smiled at each other. Freida stayed with her husband as everyone left the chapel.

At the reception, I introduced Val to everyone I knew. We were definitely an item, the Monk had found himself a gal. Tony and his wife thanked me for the tunes. Inviting Val and I to dinner after they got back from their honeymoon.
As we left through the chapel, Freida was still there. Val asked if she wanted to leave with us. We talked as we went to her car. She remembered I played the organ for a wedding, the year before. She had been a church organist and choir director. We waved as she drove off. What good fortune to meet such a wonderful person.
Driving home we talked about the wedding and Freida. Val was happy she went, thanking me for taking her. We had our fun, while Freida was holding hands with her husband. At home we relaxed, savoring life.

One morning I asked, "Is Nancy coming over today?"
Val smiled, nodding yes.
"Goody gumdrops, I have something for her."
"What is it?"
"A book, like the one we looked at in bed. I thought her and Al might really like it."
Val did not say anything. She looked at me as if to say, "What am I going to do with you?"
Nancy arrived in good spirits. The usual puff with a chat over tea, I remembered the book. Winking at Val, "Say Nancy I brought you something, let me go get it." Val's eyes were big when I returned, holding the book behind my back.
I got as much mileage as I could. Telling Nancy, "I think you're really going to like this book." I gave Val a grin, she shook her head slowly. I handed the book to Nancy, it was a favorite on the topic of natural diet.

Clenching her hands Nancy said, "Watch this, I haven't closed my hands completely for a year."
I was excited, "You must have tried something we talked about. Tell me everything, did you try the hot shower?"
"Yes, two a day. One just before bed, and it helps me sleep all night. That doesn't happen too often."
I asked, "Did you try the love your hands tip?"
"One night I didn't feel like taking a shower. Then I woke up in the middle of the night. I didn't want to get up or disturb Al. While I was laying there I remembered that tip, so I started trying it. While I was doing that, I understood what you were saying. I was fighting with my hands. Well that's over and I got back to sleep." We all looked at each other smiling.
I asked, "What about diet? This book is great, I got everything I needed from it. It will change your life if that's what you decide to do."
Nancy paged through the book, "I didn't drink any milk at all. I usually drink a big glass every day, sometimes two."
I nodded, "That's why you can close your hands." We all smiled some more.

There was a tug, Nancy was a special good deed. I focused and started raising the vibrations in the kitchen. Telling Nancy, "I've learned a few things about hands, from playing the piano and flute." Taking one of her hands. I put her thumb in a certain spot on her other wrist, "Do you feel that lump?"
She nodded.
I put her thumb in the same spot on my wrist, "Do you feel the difference?"
She looked at me intently and nodded.
I explained, "The underlying problems with your hands are misaligned carpals. Those eight little bones that make up our wrists. They are the secret to the amazing dexterity of our hands. Something you did constantly at the mill, probably caused that to happen. Things like that are very common with factory workers. I can get them back to their proper positions, but there might be some discomfort. Like when you hit your funny bone in you elbow. What are your thoughts about all of that?"

Nancy asked, "How did you know that?"
"I felt it when I was warming your hands. What's interesting, the misalignment is different in each hand."
"What do you want me to do?"
"You need to make a decision. Maybe you should think about it for a while."
"Can you do it right now?"
"Yes, it would take about a half hour. And they might be sore for a couple of days. You will also need to do some hand and arm exercises, twice a day for a month. They will rebalance the affected muscles. I would want to check them every week too."
"Then let's get started right now."

Looking at her seriously I said, "There is one more thing. I hate to ask you to keep something from Al, but I request that it does not leave this room. There is a very good reason for that, I promise to tell you sometime."
Nancy nodded, Val and I smiled at each other.
I centered myself looking in Nancy's eyes. To feel her wrists and absorb the discomfort. We took it slow, loosening them up. They were stressed from the misalignment. As the carpals moved to their proper positions, I felt their happiness. Her hands and wrists were radiating joy. Then I warmed them, one then the other several times. To get the energy flowing in the correct pathways.

When we got done I asked, "How do they feel?"
Nancy started crying, "You just fixed my hands. They have never felt right and now they do. I don't know what to say, because thank you just isn't enough."
I gave her a big smile, "In truth that's more than enough, I love you Nancy." We stood and hugged. I started crying too, looking at Val to regain my composure. That did not help, she was also crying. She said thoughtfully, "I'm starting to see about the good deeds."

I explained to Nancy, "You said I fixed you hands, so let me tell you what really happened. I knew what was wrong with them. But I couldn't do anything, because there was internal conflict. The night you sent Love to them, you planted powerful seeds. They grew and flowered, all I did was sprinkle water on them. You fixed your hands, not me. I meant it when I said that was the best tip of all. That was the perfect time too, you were very relaxed."
At the same time without a word, we all joined hands looking in each other's eyes. I knew a special door had opened. Soft waves of energy washed over us, a gentle blessing from higher up. When it subsided after a few minutes, it had cleared some cobwebs. I recalled a life when Val and I were sisters, and Nancy was our mother. We all smiled at each other with Love.

After a while Nancy was heading home. I suggested, "I could warm your hands if you want." They felt right, she was good to go. Val watched casually like I was buttering toast. The talks had helped, a few

more and we would be up to speed. We said our goodbyes and Nancy took off for home.

Back inside Val gave me a kiss, "Thank you so much for doing that."
"It was my good fortune to be able to help her."
"Does it hurt when you warm her hands?"
"No, it's a pleasant tingle. It does me some good too. Do you remember at the zoo, it's the same as that. I did feel it when I shifted the carpals, on purpose. I had to know what was going on. They told me what to do and how to do it. Nancy didn't feel anything though, I did that by looking in her eyes. It wasn't anything to speak of."
Val smiled, nodding her understanding.

I knew what she was wondering about, "Actually repairing damaged tissue does hurt some. How much, depends on how much damage."
"Have you ever done that with anyone?"
"Not with other people, but I've taken a lot of them to the emergency room."
"Tell me about that."
"Seeing as how they are medical emergencies. I need to warn you, they are not pleasant episodes. Are you sure you want to hear them?"
She thought for a moment then said, "Yes."
"Okay then here's one, a man had a carving fork stuck in his chest. I guess his wife got a little cranky when she heard about his girlfriend. There was a knock on my door in the middle of the night. And there he stood with a giant fork stuck in his sternum. That good deed was pretty easy to spot. Fortunately the tines of the fork hit bone, he and his wife were very lucky. It could easily have been fatal, and her life would have been an instant nightmare.
He told me he came to my apartment, because it was the only one with a light on. Off we went to the emergency room. I helped him inside, then immediately slipped out and went home. Because I knew they called the police, I like to stay behind the scenes. It would be suspicious, if they saw me doing that several times a year. I had never seen him before and I never saw him again. There have been lots of others, with no two the same."

She smiled then asked, "Have you ever healed an animal?"
I looked at her seriously, "Yes."
She nodded and thought for a moment asking, "Would you feel comfortable telling me about that?"
"Of course, I'll tell you anything I know. But again, some parts aren't very pleasant. Once you hear something, you can't unhear it. I don't want to relate things that might disturb you. I would also ask that it be our little secret, even with Nancy. These things are way out of bounds for social norms. It's another important part of my life, I've had to keep all to myself."
Val looked at me with understanding. Then said sincerely, "I see exactly what you are saying. Please continue, but only if you want to."

I smiled, "Okay then, lets start at the beginning. This was the first time, a few months after my sledding adventure. I've always loved ponds and lakes. I was exploring around a pond out in the woods, when I heard a baby crying. Of course I hurried in that direction and here's what I found.
There was a snake trying to eat a big bullfrog. It was a Black Snake, at least eight feet long. The frog's back legs were down the hatch, but it's middle was too big to swallow. The poor frog was screaming for it's life, it sounded exactly like a baby crying. The snake was in distress too. It knew it had made a big mistake, it literally had a frog stuck in it's throat.
I didn't stop to think. I grabbed the snake with both hands and held it up. Shaking it and yelling, 'You spit that frog out right now!' That scared the snake so much, it actually worked. I laid it on the ground and it made a hasty exit. Snakes can really move when they want to.
The frog was hopping toward the pond, but the skin was peeled off its back legs. I felt very sorry for it

and started crying. Something came over me so I ran and caught it. Then I sat down leaning against a tree. I was holding it very carefully, so it couldn't jump out of my hands. I looked deeply into it's eyes, and it looked at me the same way. We connected on a higher level. It stopped struggling, so I cupped it between my hands. My arms went numb with a strange vibration, and my hands were glowing with a white light. I was so wound up I felt a lot bigger than my body.

"Now I wasn't doing any of this with some kind of a plan. It was more like someone else was doing it, and I was just an observer. Ten minutes later I recovered from that weird state of mind. I lifted my top hand. The frog was just sitting there, like it was asleep. When I saw it's back legs had new skin, I started crying uncontrollably.

I carried it down to the pond, then kissed it and said, 'I Love You.' Setting it on the ground gently right by the water. In a few minutes it started shaking off the cobwebs. After a while it jumped in the water and disappeared. When I got home, Mom asked if I had seen any animals. I told her, 'Yes, a frog and a snake.'"

I was crying by then, Val was sympathetic holding my hand. I said, "I'm so glad to finally talk to someone about this. I have a volcano of bottled up emotions over these things."

Val smiled, "Then tell me another."

I squeezed her hand, "Then how about one of my favorites. This one was out in the woods too. I was collecting specimens for a Science class assignment. It was late winter, we were supposed to find things that were signs of spring.

"I came across a lady fox, with her leg caught in a jaw trap. It was crushed and she was in shock. I thought about taking her to a vet, but I knew that would cost a lot of money. Even so, then what? She'd have to be taken in as a pet, because she couldn't survive with only three legs. And I had already promised my mom, I wouldn't bring home any more injured animals.

I carefully opened the trap and threw it in the bushes. I was doing yoga by then. There's a seated position called the lotus pose. I'll show you, it will be easier than trying to explain." After I did I sat in the chair again, "That pose recirculates your energy in a continuous loop. Now back to our vixen. I picked her up gently then sat in the lotus pose, with my back against a big pine tree. Trees radiate considerable etheric energy. Pine etheric is compatible to ours, I needed a bunch right then.

I nestled the fox in my lap, so I could wrap my hands around her crushed leg. I was better from practice, and quickly let a higher self take over. As usual I was riding in the rumble seat. Her leg was repaired in thirty minutes, and I returned to my version of normal.

I sat there holding her, of course I was crying the whole time. That always happens when my heart center is wound up. That's where our connection to the infinite is located. Maybe someday I'll be pure enough that it doesn't happen.

I was holding the fox, but there was something else going on. I felt like I was holding an angel. Her whiskers started twitching then her paws, as she gradually recovered. She was asleep but breathing normally. Eventually she wanted to stand up. So I carefully put her on the ground. Then got on my knees and kissed her head saying, 'I Love You.' I sat down again watching her carefully, she was so beautiful and holy.

"An hour after I found her, she walked off without a limp. When she got twenty feet away she stopped. Then slowly and deliberately turned around to face me. She sat down and looked at me intently, with a very piercing look.

Then she smiled, I had a direct communion with her indwelling spirit. She became an exquisite, radiant being of light. My brain stooped in it's tracks, time stopped, reality stopped. I wasn't in one realm or another, I was in all of them. It was a moment of supreme understanding.

After blessing me with a sacred gift, she disappeared in the bushes. I sat there crying tears of joy. I knew I had been holding God in my lap."

We were both crying so we hugged for a bit. After we sat again I said, "So here we are full circle, you were wondering if those things hurt. The frog hurt some, like a bad sunburn. But it was gone by the next morning. The fox hurt more, like when I crashed my bike and landed on my arm. But it was nothing compared to my joy, watching her walk away."

Val smiled and nodded thoughtfully.

I added, "Let me tell you something interesting. During those events I share my consciousness with the animal's. I see the world through their eyes and they see it through mine. That has a positive effect on both of us. Now I'll tell you the most interesting part. Some of he animals I've helped have given me spiritual gifts. Each one is like a piece of a giant puzzle. I have no idea what the puzzle is, but it's big and extremely powerful. Because each small piece is very powerful.

Let me give examples, maybe that will help. The first time when I shared with the frog. I found out they have advanced psychic abilities, because of the nature of their etheric forms. It has something to do with being amphibians. They take an evolutionary step during each life. The frog's gift to me, was the ability to communicate with animals. Besides being fun at the zoo, it is very useful when I help one. The amount of communication possible varies between animals, even of the same species. Because they are all unique just like us.

The fox showed me my direct connection to Love, the ultimate force in the universe. But if the truth be told about that. I don't use it, it uses me. A cat that was hit by a car, helped me with my astral vision. A snake showed me how to commune with Earth. There are others that gave me things I don't understand yet. In fact most of them are in that category. But I am certain I will understand all of it someday. When I have a more expansive view of myself.

So after all that, let me ask a question. Would you be willing to hurt a little, if it kept Nancy from hurting a lot?" Val raised her eyebrows and smiled. By then we were ready for naps.

I awoke first and got spruced up. Prepping dinner and charging the atmosphere with romantic love. The kitchen was perfumed by a peach cobbler. Albums were on the hi-fi, ready to switch on. When Val woke up she came to the kitchen. I liked her robe and slippers, as much as when she dressed for dinner. I may have gone over some when I charged the house with romance. I wanted to make mad passionate love on the table. Instead I poured a cup of tea.

With a smile she asked, "What's that heavenly smell?"

The cobbler was done, I showed it to her. Kissing her cheek, "I found some beautiful peaches at the store. It's made without sugar, I hope you like it" We sipped tea, talking about Classical music.

After waking up she wanted a shower. I waited impatiently for her return. She was so lovely my eyes filled with tears. We hugged while I composed myself.

A trip to the back porch was in order, for a smoke and a dazzling sunset. I turned on the hi-fi and she sipped wine at the table. Uncorking my culinary skills, I prepared crab thermidor and stuffed artichokes. Val smiled as she watched.

I winked and raised my eyebrows, "Are you impressed?"

She laughed and nodded.

I lit the tapers and we had a wonderful candlelight dinner. I used my service experience to good effect. We passed on the cobbler for then. She relaxed in the living room and I polished the kitchen. Then we sipped wine and chatted while the meal settled.

Coming in from a smoke she asked, "That's very good weed, where do you get it?"

"When I started with the Company as a technician, I lived in California. After this supervisor job came open I put in for it. I was the only internal applicant, because this plant was really screwed up. More than half of the control systems were shut off. They were doing things manually, the old-fashioned way. It was costing the Company a bundle.

Everyone out there thought I was off my rocker. Because in California, this is considered an arctic

wasteland. With all of that, I asked for a lot of money. Because I really didn't care if I got it or not. I liked my job and I liked living in California. I had already proven myself, but I was still surprised when they agreed to my terms. You know how all of that turned out.

"While I was living out there, I met these two brothers. They're from Brooklyn and they are a couple of real characters. They had plenty of money from selling weed in New York. So they bought a nice place out in the mountains. It's gorgeous, with big pine trees and a lake. For their particular scheme, the best part was industrial wiring to the property. Because it was originally a sawmill.
Their idea was to bury railroad cars, and grow weed inside them. With those powerful lights used over parking lots. So the G-men couldn't spot it from airplanes. They had everything covered except the electrical side of things. That's where I came in, it's my field of expertise. It sounded so wild I decided to help them out.

"I suggested we get the sawmill running, to account for the power usage. We really liked it and made huge stacks of lumber. We built several structures for peanuts. We also setup a big generator, in case they lost power from the electric company. It was government surplus, we thought that was a nice touch.
As far as the railroad cars, we buried four right up against each other. That was quite a trick. They rented a big track hoe, supposedly to dig a pond. I rigged the cars with cable lifts and operated the hoe. I got really good with a backhoe working at the orchard. The final thing was a shed over the hatches, with hidden trap doors.

"The lights and controls were standard industrial electric. A lot of fans are needed, because the lights produce considerable heat. A funny thing that became a problem was the smell. The stuff stinks to high heaven with that much. I knew about air scrubbers from college, they are fairly specialized. The first question from a supplier would be, 'How are you going to use them?' So we built our own, the charcoal approach is pretty simple.
We coordinated everything. They did most of the work, and I helped on weekends and vacations. As far as the wiring, I gave them an electrical seminar as we went. Along with a nice stack of reference books. That whole project was a blast, I love crazy stuff like that. We all became close friends.
They offered me a lot up front. But I said I would only participate, if money was not involved. So now I get all the free weed I want. I give it to a few close friends to reduce their legal exposure."
Val was listening with wide eyes and a smile. She laughed and said, "Thank you for telling me that, don't worry my lips are sealed."
"There's nothing to worry about. The no money clause is a key part of that."

Later on the porch, I held her from behind watching the stars. Time slowed, we both felt it. She whispered, "I want to try something from the book, and I want you to choose."
"I thought you would never ask."
Afterwards we cuddled for a time. Imitating me she whispered, "Books are your friends." We laughed.
I asked, "Do you want to try the peach cobbler?" We sat nibbling, holding hands across the table. As we fell asleep we told each other, "I love you."

The next morning the party was over, Val had to work that afternoon. I broke the news, "I've got to go out to California, I'll be gone for a week."
She laughed, "That's okay, it will take me that long to recover from last night." We laughed together making small talk. I kissed each finger, "I love you," and I was off.

Corporate wanted me to give classes at a training seminar. I always had fun at business functions. Hearing almost everything under the professional veneer. The maneuvering, the pecking order, the

secret alliances, the fakes and sometimes some interesting secrets. They were safe with me of course. Occasionally there was the real deal, they were easy to spot. They were not being pretentious, so I did not pick them up.
I was stoked up at the seminar, some adults sat in for a while. They noticed when I came on tech assists, problems got solved. They were eyeing me for a promotion, there might be a pitch next time out.

I checked in with my cannabis friends, being careful when I tried their offering. As we sat in overstuffed chairs, I shared inspirations about automated greenhouses. Giving them detailed plans and schematics. Also an interesting World War Two manual, on techniques for aerial camouflage. We had intense discussions. I liked them, they had no pretensions whatsoever. I realized they were the other end of the spectrum from Corporate, they were my balance.
There was the usual troubleshooting list, and new equipment to integrate. They showed me their latest technique for growing under lights. Using a horizontal trellis, to establish an even foliage canopy. More than doubling their yield from the same space. They had also perfected organic nutrient solutions, and a reliable application schedule. On the plane home I enjoyed the views, thinking about Val. I liked flying now and then.

I made it back in time for Nancy's visit. She had read the natural diet book and lent it to a friend. She had a good plan to move in the right direction. We talked about her hands. The pain was gone, even when they were cold. She was enjoying things she had been avoiding. We warmed them anyway, just for fun. She had something to do and left early.
After I walked her to her car. She looked at me seriously, "Did you and Val ever talk about her husband?"
"Not yet. I've seen the picture, but the time didn't feel right."
Nancy gave me details, including a date in the following week.
I nodded, "I see why you mentioned it, thank you very much." We hugged and said our goodbyes.

CHAPTER 10 - A LIFE

After Nancy left I asked, "Are you in the mood for a talk?" We sat at the lake feeding the geese. It was a nice morning, you could feel spring just around the corner. I began, "I told you it's divine wisdom, we don't remember our nightly adventures. Starting around fourteen I've been aware during many of mine. What I'm about to say are things I've picked up here and there. There's so much more to know, especially about the higher floors. This won't even scratch the surface. I want to talk about the life cycle of a typical person, then about past lives. All I can do is sketch an outline, and be assured there are many exceptions.

"The origin of our present lives was on the upper level of the third floor. Our bodies there contain our complete Earth histories. That's our true home until we finally leave for another planet. Right now we're like deep sea divers. We put on a special suit, so we can experience the dense environment. We're even connected through a lifeline in the same way. Due to the irresistible force of evolution, we have a basic need to learn and grow. We come down to the bottom for more challenging experiences. Then rise back up though a series of adventures. Physical life on Earth is the bottom part of the cycle.

You know what happens while we're alive. So let's start just before a person dies. Our spirit knows to the second when we'll leave. It was all carefully arranged before we were born. The planning and organization involves billions of people, so it all has to be perfectly synchronized. A few weeks before that some changes begin. Our etheric form stops collecting energy and begins to discharge. We loosen our grip on our physical body. A sensitive person can detect that in themselves, and sometimes in others.

At the appointed time we leave our bodies, just like we do every night. Only this time we're not coming back. Unless it's an unplanned accident, assistants are always standing by. It's a very important step and nothing is left to chance. What happens at that point depends on many things. The most important one is how we conducted ourselves during that life.

"I need to stress the firm reality of wherever we end up. Because we will be using different perceptive faculties. Our consciousness is imperishable. We will be quite aware, even more so than here. In comparison, the physical world looks like a shadow and seems like a dream.

Vacating our physical bodies is a lot like taking off a pair or gloves. As soon as we leave for the last time, the lifeline is disconnected. Then our etheric and physical forms separate, and both begin to disintegrate. The next useful body is the astral, the second floor. Think of those Russian dolls. When we're in the astral realm, our bodies are as real as our physical ones here. Much more so as far as the intensity of our emotions, also remember the enhanced senses.

Earth's astral region goes from inside the surface, to way out in space. Something like halfway to the moon. But we can go much further with experience.

Thanks to four dimensions the astral can be confusing. One example is that things might appear reversed. Sometimes on a door in a familiar room, it looks like the knob is on the wrong side. As if you're looking at it from the other room. When you look at a house. You not only see that, you also see everything inside. You get used to it quickly though. If you pay attention you can pick up a lot of good tips. Size can be distorted too. Because you can zoom in or out like a telephoto lens.

"I've read theories that time is the fourth dimension. That's not the case, although time can be very distorted. It's actually another spatial dimension. Somehow at right angles to width, length and height. I want to learn more about that. Something else can be confusing, things are layered by when they were created. You might see two buildings in the same spot. The older one is less distinct, but it can still be confusing.

Here's something interesting, a few times I thought I was in the past. Because there were plants and animals that are extinct now. So I asked my Friend about it. They said the past is all there, clear back

to the beginning of Earth. But their advice was to stay in the present. You can view it though, without actually visiting."
She wanted something.
"What are you wondering about?"
"Can you tell me about your Friend."
"Sure, you ask the best questions. They are one rung up the ladder from us. I know they have to throttle way down to commune with me. We made a connection in my animal days. It was thanks to their influence I became individualized.
Sometimes they come to visit to see how I'm doing. And they usually teach me something important. Just by them looking at me, I'll have an intense learning experience. The higher helping the lower is celestial etiquette. The further we move up, the more that's demonstrated. A good example is you helping Noni.
As sure as the sun's coming up tomorrow. Noni will someday be part of an advanced society. You will have progressed considerably too. One morning you will say to yourself, 'I wonder how my dear friend Noni is getting along?' Then go and pay her a surprise visit.
Here's the usual fun part. I really appreciate them taking the time. So I tried to think of some way to make a gesture of thanks. I offered the use of my physical body, at a convenient time. So they could get a blast from the past. They would not even consider asking such a thing. But they took me up on it, while I was out hiking in the woods. They enjoyed it, which is really something to see. I was happy I could do something for them, in return for their timeless Love."
Val smiled and nodded to continue.

"Another strange thing in the astral, is hazy looking people who aren't really conscious. Only in the lower areas though. A person's etheric form should disintegrate right after they die. But sometimes it doesn't if they died suddenly, or they were very attached to the physical world. Those are what people call ghosts.
There are other types of astral beings who have never been physical. We pass through on our way Home, but they are native residents. They will never leave that world until they move up the ladder. The spirit beings that take care of plants for example. There are other kinds of beings that are somewhat like living puppets. They are created from people's desires and emotions. They range for huge terrifying monsters to radiant unicorns. It's easy to tell them from actual beings though. They love to scare people fresh off the bus, who think they are real.

"The astral is technically a material world but highly rarefied. I told you everyone is constantly creating. The astral world is manifested by certain aspects of our creativity. Our emotions and desires create a palpable reality. One that is quite frankly, more real than the physical.
The astral world reflects the range of emotions. Greed at the bottom becomes generosity at the top. Lassitude becomes motivation, fear turns into courage. Emotions are like learning to play the violin. It starts out as one of the worst sounds, and becomes one of the best. The only difference is the skill of the person drawing the bow.
The seven aspects from each of the seven forces, give us forty-nine basic emotional facets. Things like courage, ingenuity, pragmatism, compassion, enthusiasm, altruism, integrity and fortitude. They germinate in the physical world. Then we develop them through concerted effort, both here and in the astral. It is a very difficult and complicated task. Each one can take several lifetimes, to evolve to a reasonable degree. Typically we're focused on one or two during a life. But we try to have as many as possible, simmering on the back burners. It would be impossible to perfect our emotions, without the incisive laboratory of the astral world.

"Something else is important. Emotions are considerably more intense, because the vibrations are so much higher. This world is the realm of sensations, the astral is the realm of emotions. The two words are interchangeable. Our astral bodies are our emotional bodies. When we see astral auras, we are

seeing emotions.
There is something else to consider, and this is true in all of the realms. Our energetic surroundings are rarely static. Because like attracts like, and similar things are drawn together. The more rarefied the world, the more that comes into play. In the astral it creates tides of emotion, both good and bad. They swirl and create ever changing formations, like local weather. They sweep over and will affect us, if we are resonant with them. If we have similar emotional energy in our own auras.
As an example, let's say there is something we dislike in others. That is positive proof we have it in our own auras. Otherwise it wouldn't bother us. The first thing we tend to do is deny it. Instead we should consider the matter carefully, and purify it with unconditional Love.

"Our astral bodies are powered by energy centers, just like our etheric forms. There is an alignment between them, but the astral ones exist in four dimensions. There are seven major ones and many smaller ones. At your wrists, knees and other critical places. A rough analogy would be step-down transformers, like you see on utility poles. A common name for them is chakras, which means wheels. They look more like whirlpools to me. Except the top one, it looks like a beautiful fountain. That's what the halos depict in religious paintings. The crowns of kings and queens are also symbols of that chakra.
As they convert energy, they turn and create colored patterns. You can tell a lot about someone by the way they look. If they're intentionally activated. They look like beautiful, constantly blooming flowers.
Here's how the astral appears to me. The upper part is somewhat normal feeling and so are the surroundings. But further down it gets misty until I focus on something. Then I find groups of people doing similar things. Like building a boat, fighting a battle or watching a concert. Sometimes it's only one person or an animal, and sometimes it's crowded cities.
It's always surprising and interesting, even things like flowers are amazing. The best way to describe it is a living fairy tale. And leave all of the rules at the door. It's my feeling that carnivals and circuses, are subconscious attempts to recreate the astral. Bright lights flashing, the rides spinning, people calling for your attention.

"The highest astral regions are from the finest emotions. Compared to Earth it's paradise. Beautiful homes, gardens, cities, forests and lakes. It's also brightly lit in a pleasant way. People like and help each other. They are advanced enough to create surroundings that please them. It's a wonderland where anything is possible. If you want red trees and purple grass, have at it.
Many of the fantasy books and fairy tales are astral adventures. That's why 'The Wizard of Oz' and 'Alice In Wonderland', get under everyone's skin. They're tapping into our hidden memories. The Emerald City in Oz is a good example. Because of four dimensions in the astral, places can be seen off in the distance. Like a glowing city or beautiful natural wonders. Flying monkeys are like the imaginary creatures, people create with their emotions. The Brothers Grimm stories are just another day in the lower astral. Which explains their persistent, universal popularity. Because we've all been in similar circumstances.

"On the topic of the afterlife, the Buddha said something interesting, 'More go down than up.' As you move downwards. Things gradually become less pleasant, and the light gets dimmer. After a certain point it becomes oppressively dark. The lowest areas are from the evil passions. I cannot overstate how bad those places are. If someone thought of murder and mayhem their whole lives. The reality created is thoroughly awful, as well as the residents. Their full-time occupation is trying to kill each other.
There are different areas that reflect all of the evil passions. If a person got just a glimpse of those places. They would turn their lives completely around.
I have no experience in the deepest areas. But my Friend graciously shared an overview. Strangely enough, they are mostly from the upper tiers of society. It's true irony, it takes education and worldly

experience to drop that far. Prominent figures from history sank that deep in just one life.
Not just the deranged tyrants. Successful men and women from business, politics and religions. Kings, queens and world leaders. Popes, cardinals and other eminent religious figures. Those who abused their sacred commissions. Crooked politicians, the heartless land barons and business tycoons, pretty much a who's who of humanity's scoundrels. The common trait I picked up was pride. They are so completely self-absorbed, there is no room for anything spiritual. And everyone hates everyone else to an extreme degree.
Because they abused so many for their selfish ends, they are way down past the murderers. Their perpetual scheming and plotting makes it extremely dangerous. My Friend said they are very obstinate and almost impossible to help. Some have been there for a thousand years, many Romans are still there.

"Some were highly respected on Earth. They thought if they kept their activities secret, there would be no repercussions. Especially after getting away with it for a lifetime. Each time it got easier, and they embraced their misdeeds wholeheartedly. They made one little mistake. They know all of it, every dirty little secret. Now they cannot escape that knowledge. They built a prison for themselves, and now they are trapped inside.
The bottom line is, they are failing the intelligence course in spectacular fashion. Because they have squandered so much time. They are in danger of being set back to another cycle. Then they will have to start all over again, like failing a grade in school. A few hundred million years wasted because of total selfishness. The very worst may lose their individualization. Back into the murky swamp of evolution. Now we're talking billions of years wasted.
Religions call those places hell. I don't know how deep it goes, I honestly don't want to. That whole mess is the result of misused creativity.

"Another important thing, some think it's a game to contact random astral beings. Seances, spirit raisings, voodoo and the others. It would be safer to play with matches and dynamite. Because the one's most likely to respond are the bottom feeders. They know they can leech physical energy and sensations. Especially if they are offered freely. The good ones are busy with something constructive. They would never participate in those activities.
Once the pathway of communication is established. The person's divine protection is compromised, assuming it was done with free will. That protection can only be restored, by someone with advanced spiritual abilities. It's an easy door to open, but it's very difficult to close.
It's like giving you house keys to a gang of thieves. Ones that not only can affect your physical well being. They can easily invade your dreams. That can quickly become a dance with madness. I'm mentioning this, because I met someone who made that mistake. They could no longer function in society.

"When we're in the astral, we have access to our astral memories. I'll tell you about an experience I had down there, not very far down either. This took place a long time ago, in the early days of Atlantis.
In that life I was wealthy, arrogant and conceited. I had vicious dogs I turned loose after wild animals. They would chase the animal to exhaustion, then bring it to me. The dogs did not dare kill the animals. Because they knew I would club them senseless. After I made them wait, to prove who was master. I'd nod my head and they would rip the animal to shreds. I didn't need the meat, I liked the fear and the suffering.
After I died I woke up in a forest, it was more real than this park. Off in the distance, I heard a pack of dogs chasing their prey. I listened closely because I always loved that sound. As the howling got closer I started to get nervous. There were no houses or people around. Just me alone in the deep woods, sitting on a fallen log. They were getting closer so I stood up, not knowing what to do. I saw the dogs, it was a pack of primitive wolves. They knew where I was and were leaping straight for me.

I was terrified, looking around for somewhere to hide. There were big trees, but none with branches low enough to climb. I could see their teeth and snapping jaws, so I panicked and ran. I didn't get far before one knocked me to the ground. I could feel their bites in my body. The pain was intense and I finally blacked out.

"After a while I woke up. I could still feel the pain from the bites, but my body was intact. I heard the howling again, off in the distance but getting closer. Hearing them approach gradually was maddening. It wasn't long before they caught me again, and ate me alive.

I woke up again with even more pain, but my body was restored. That continued on and on, for what seemed like years. All of my arrogance was long gone. I lay there whimpering, 'Please, someone help me.'

As the wolves were heard again, I saw a glow approaching. It was a man who sternly took my hand. He led me to a building I hadn't seen, once inside I collapsed in exhaustion.

It was a rescue mission. At great risk and discomfort to themselves. They left splendid lives to help those who asked. While everyone else was in paradise, I lived in a bare cell in that stark building. Until my astral body finally disintegrated. Fortunately it wasn't hundreds of years. Because getting torn apart so many times had taken a toll. My life review was not pleasant. I had reveled in suffering and I received a full cup.

"I want to point out the impartial response to our desires. The ocean of creative potential faithfully reproduces our emotions. No matter what they are. I liked suffering, so that's what I got. The moral to the story is, plant the seeds you would like to harvest.

After leaving their physical body behind, some live in the astral. Where we end up depends on our energetic profile. We go exactly where we belong because of natural laws. We can't bribe, promise, threaten or change that in any way. With unerring precision, we reap what we have sown. The inner life we live here, becomes the literal world we live in there. That same thing is true all the way up the line.

No matter where we end up, we can always rise through good works. By pursuing things that raise our vibrations. But the reverse is also true, some manage to sink further through malicious behavior.

"Which brings up a good point. The time to start doing that is immediately. Every decision should be based on, will this raise or lower my vibrations? Everything is secondary to that.

If we help someone, it raises our vibrations. If we intentionally harm others, it lowers them. If we are honest we expand our consciousness, if we lie we diminish ourselves. Any situation can be distilled to that, although there might be many things to consider. If we let our hearts guide us, the way will be clear.

There's something else that's interesting. It's common for people in the astral, to not know they have died. That is due to errors in their beliefs. Inaccurate ideas they firmly accepted as reality. That might illustrate what I've tried to stress, it's all very real.

Your dwelling will be whatever you created by your aspirations. If through your own effort you had a home, one will be waiting there for you. There is somewhere for everyone though. There are astral apartment complexes, as big as cities.

"Our astral bodies eventually disintegrate. Some call that the second death, or being reborn into the kingdom of heaven. Something interesting happens then. Our experiences, personalities, skills, mannerisms and other traits are meticulously archived. They will be used to get our next physical life started. We perceive that process as a detailed life review. Experiencing every significant event in a real-life simulation.

The most important things are the effects we had on others. Things we hardly noticed might have had a dramatic impact. A helping hand or a friendly smile, a snide comment or ridicule, things good and bad. We always have plenty to think about later, and a laundry list of things to work on. Our

inevitable life review should be kept in mind at all times. Deliberate harm to others or nature will be very distressing.

"Who stands in judgment? We judge ourselves, and we don't pull any punches. Who knows us better than us, especially our motivations? The gravity of an event is not so much the result, as our intention. Life isn't just lessons, it's a precision testing ground. It shows us our weak areas so we can work on them.

Another reason Earth is such a good school, there are no right answers. Often we must choose the least of two evils. The ultimate goal for any situation is when everyone wins. That is frequently easier said than done. Wise and compassionate counselors assist the review process.

"There's a wonderful reason why that's done right then. The third floor is harmonious, and the review process may be stressful. The good news is that you're moving to a world that's harmonious. That's where the real fun begins. It was willed into existence by our persistent, selfless thoughts. It's extraordinary at the entry point, and gets better as you move up.

If we live an above average life, we go directly there. That should be everyone's number one goal. You will go straight there for example, because you've got your act together. You thoughts control your life, not your emotions.

If our inner life is desire and emotion, we go to the astral. If those are subordinate to a thoughtful and measured life. It's off to the thought world. If our efforts had enough spiritual merit. We just might land on the permanent level, all the way back to base camp. Pretty much a grand slam home run. The true measure of a lifetime's success, is the improvement of our intelligence.

"The thought world has two levels. Our body for the lower part is not permanent, it's another phase our present life cycle. Consideration and concern for others is the theme of the third floor. Personal things are toward the bottom, like affection for friends and family. The higher areas are from altruism, concern for mankind and all of creation.

In the thought world we can acquire any knowledge, by simply focusing on the topic. We will have complete understanding. We can also acquire anyone else's knowledge or experiences. There can be no deception, so there are no misunderstandings. Everyone is always on the same page.

Soon after we get our bearings. We have a joyous reunion with loved ones, from countless lives. A welcome Home party for an audacious hero. In some cases a person from lower can attend. I went to my grandfather's reunion, that was an instance of divine grace.

After the reunion we are shown to our own dwelling. It will far exceed what we might have expected, just as a plant far surpasses it's seed. Our ideas and desires are seeds we're planting, in the fertile gardens of the thought and astral worlds. But there's an important difference. Any thoughts that include self have emotions mixed in. Even though they might be the finest possible. That creation ends up in the astral.

Only the pure and selfless thoughts go to the third floor or higher. Think of the implications of that, what it's like where everything is harmonious. Where everyone is a dear friend, and every day is a wonderful adventure.

"We spend most of a life cycle above the physical realm. How much time on each floor, depends on our priorities as we lived. Also what we do after we leave the physical world. Many people resolve some emotional matters in the astral. Then spend most of their afterlives in the thought world. Those who put their ideas into practice go to the permanent level. They didn't just think about things, they made them happen. Through hard work, sacrifice and enduring commitment. That level is like a base camp, between expeditions into the physical world. Our entire Earth history is there, a few hundred million years worth. That book will be fun to page through.

The physical part of this cycle is the school of hard knocks. But at the end of the day it all pays off in diamonds. If we can just have some self-control and a little motivation. By spending our lives, planting

a wide variety of desirable seeds. This world is the planting, everything after is the harvest.
If you like music, your life in heaven will be filled. If you helped others, you will be graciously helped. If you liked construction work you can do that, with one big difference. The only limit will be your imagination. If you planted flowers, you'll be surrounded with flowers that radiate Love.
The point being, we should plant as many seeds as possible. Looking into this and trying that. A single thought can introduce an entire world.
Our core mandate is 'BE!'. I interpret that to mean, 'Do it all, live it all, learn all of it, leave no stone unturned.' It's a very big two-letter word.

"As a note, if we go higher than our frequencies dictate, we feel progressively more uneasy. We sense that we're in over our heads and make the adjustment. A glimpse of things beyond isn't bad though. Sometimes people buckle down, and maybe even start a new life plan. They've got their eyes on the prize.
There's something else, standing wave barriers are between floors. You can use a higher body on a lower floor. But you can't take a lower body up a floor. The higher realm's purity is protected by the barrier. It's also safety for the entity. Because a lower body cannot withstand the higher energetic levels. There are exceptions to that. Where someone from lower can be helped to ascend temporarily. By protecting them with a refined energy bubble.

"What we do after our reunion is based on many things. The seeds we planted on Earth and our unique personalities. Also our ongoing growth strategy, taken over multiple lives. Are we hitting it hard or ready for some fun? Three basic categories are doing this cycle, groups, pairs and loners. Everyone starts out in groups that number in the billions. At the end of the day, we'll all be back together again. Over time the big groups fracture into smaller ones. The members have similar energetic profiles. Individuals leave the groups occasionally and they gradually erode.
The groups prefer communal life on the third floor, with friends from their many past lives. There is always something interesting going on. Like a college dorm taken to another level. They like to plan lives with others from their group. A cast of players enacting a production, as family members, coworkers and close friends. They assume roles that will challenge or compliment each other. Helping them all to reach their life goals. Frequently the roles are adversarial. On this side they lean toward fraternity and group dynamics.

"Pairs like us are fairly common. They are two that formed a bond somewhere along the way. They managed to find their perfect match. Then left their groups to pursue the course as a pair. Their bond gets deeper and deeper. As they dance around the bonfire of life, down through the ages. In time they are a matched set like bookends. They become each other's, one true love.
If they have both passed on, one of a pair will always join the other. Even back down to the astral, until they can live together in the thought world. If their match is still physical they may hover nearby. Helping and protecting their heart's desire. Freida's husband is a good example.
As the pairs progress along the path, they can live as high as their energetic profiles allow. Establishing a base of operations, living in castles, manors, estates, villages and beautiful cities. Everywhere from rugged mountain peaks to quaint seaside towns. Finding one's match is never random. They plan together and set that as their primary life goal.

"The loners are rare, they are braving the gale by themselves. Sometimes they have a fixed home as high as they can. But they might live in a lower area. To pursue a particular goal, or because they like the surroundings. Some live as free spirits. Always traveling and savoring life, seeking out natural wonders on the way. That's enticing, in a world where everyone is considerate and loving.

"The opportunities for learning are endless. Exalted teachers come and share their wisdom. Just a few of their words can change your existence. There are exhaustive libraries with amazing books.

They convey their contents as experiences. A popular group recreation is exploring exotic places. Occasionally concerts are conducted by the composer. Everyone has several jobs. Not drudgery, interesting things that involve creation or service. Assisting people through their departures is a good example.

You can travel however you like. Stroll on a path, swim through the air or use a flying chariot. If you can think it, you can do it. To move farther you think of your destination, and arrive there instantly. To send someone a message, you just think of them.

Our appearance works the same way, we can appear however we choose. When we first get Home, we look like we did here. Then we grow younger and return to the prime of our life. That appearance reflects our energetic profile, but we can will ourselves to look like anything.

Hobbies include all of the arts and sciences. Many recreational activities are popular, like sailing and skiing. Music is popular. Hobby musicians there, would be top-shelf virtuosi here.

It's a wonderful world where thoughts are reality. The trivial struggles of our brief physical life seem irrelevant. When compared to the joy of our existence there. We are much closer to the source of all things.

"The exceptional go to higher areas straight from their life reviews. I've had glimpses, no words can describe the splendor. But nothing is out of reach, good works always lead to improved circumstances. Existence on the third floor is a gradual ascension, everything just gets better and better. Expanded vistas and new friends are the order of the day. Life that is always fresh and exciting. Where you just can't wait to see what will happen next.

Think of the things that presently occupy us. Working for an income, dressing, cooking, housework, shopping, driving, sleeping. Those things take up most of our lives, imagine our existence without them.

At some point our lower thought bodies are left behind, then we return to the upper level. You might call it the dormitory for this college called Earth. We leave to take a class, then return to relax and regroup. To consider our latest adventures and have some fun.

"After a time ranging from immediately, to thousands of years. The force of evolution prompts another concentrated growth experience. Life on Earth is exactly that. Back into the forge to further perfect the metal. We begin to prepare, studying this and practicing that. A general itinerary is worked out. Several people or large groups might plan together. There are always many variables, nothing is ever certain. Things usually go haywire. Strangely enough, that's where the real learning begins.

Another thing, there are many accidents. Someone strays off their life plan and goes careening through the procession. People frequently make the wrong decisions. When their life goes off the rails, it affects all concerned. There are occasional fortunate accidents, sometimes they are real game changers.

"An agency helps you find a situation, appropriate to your life goals. Which brings up a good point. Our options for our next life, depend on how we did the last time. Did we work hard and use our opportunities wisely? Or did we make mistakes and squander them? The best situations go to the most deserving, based on past performances. That's another reason to knock one out of the ballpark.

So you've studied and made your plans. Then lined up a suitable family and cultural situation. The day is fast approaching, when your future mother will become pregnant.

When she does, an energetic outline is created by a divine being. The blueprint for your physical vehicle. An unthinkably complex, multi-dimensional coloring book. You work together filling in the lines, building your future body.

The big day is drawing near. You make a solemn agreement, for your memories to be hidden during that life. Then something very sacred happens, we fuse our spirit with that small body. Of course that is a profound moment for all concerned. When everything is finally finished, and the time is exactly right. Whack, and a baby cries in a delivery room.

"I've got to comment on the courage all of this takes. Well aware of what they plan to experience. A long life as a slave, an inescapable marriage to an abusive spouse. Protracted illness, a life of grinding poverty, disabilities, the callous brutality of war. Or even the rigors and challenges of everyday life. It's not whimsical, you're locked in for the duration.

Sometimes people end the exercise prematurely. They are usually sent back immediately, to live the exact time they had left. That is not a retribution. It has to do with the highly complex, organizational matrix. Advanced beings coordinate the whole enterprise. There you have it, a life on Earth.

There's something important to mention. The positive experiences, knowledge and abilities we acquire. Become permanent aspects of our immortal being. A lifetime is valid, it is a very serious and sacred undertaking."

We stood to stretch, I kissed her cheek asking, "Questions?"

She smiled, "Not now, but I'm sure I'll think of some later." We had a thermos of tea and shared a cup.

I asked, "Is that enough for today? I wanted to talk about past lives. It shouldn't take so long, but I know it's about time to eat." She wanted to hear about past lives then eat later.

CHAPTER 11 - OLD BUSINESS

We settled back down and I continued, "There's a big organized group of us, pursuing this cycle of learning. It's all part of an expansive celestial plan, being overseen by advanced coordinators. The big picture is a program of ascension to unimaginable heights. Within our group are different factions, those with similar traits and tendencies. There can also be an inclination to certain regions and cultures.

Let's focus on our current lessons, evolving intelligence on Earth. The time frame is enormous. And as you well know, every life is an epic saga. At first we're primitive, with little progress from life to life. Then fortunate circumstances lead to growth. We might risk our life to help someone. Now we have a foothold and progress is made in bigger steps. We develop a strategy, building skill sets, honing talents, developing propensities and a personality. Those propensities, skills and talents are stored, as we cross into the thought world. Along with our physical and psychological profiles.

"When the baby's energetic blueprint is wrought by the divine being. Those propensities and traits are interwoven, we have something to get started with. And with perfect justice, it's what we've earned and developed ourselves. That's where talents originate. Artistic and academic prodigies, or the particular aptitudes of anyone.

There's a big difference between learning something and remembering it. We pick up where we left off to an extent, that really kicks in around puberty. Another instance of divine grace, gives young people some benefit of the doubt.

Early lives seem random, but they're building us a foundation. The fun really begins when we deliberately tie lives together. Like we are doing right this minute. Things go to a whole new level. Another good thing, we are over the hump. The hardest part of this course is behind, and we're on the downhill side.

"Some alternate gender each life, focusing on balanced growth. Others might pursue courage and fortitude, with a male identity for several rounds. Then work on love and compassion with female lives for a while. That makes readjustment challenging. It's hard to get back in the swing of things, after several lives as the other gender. It can be a difficult adjustment after just one life. Especially if we went all in gender wise. It's like a pendulum. The further it goes in one direction, the further it will swing back.

It's easy to go to extremes, the real challenge is establishing a working balance. On the other hand, some things can only be learned by extremes. Being very rich or poor are good examples. In different ways, both are the true tests of character.

This process develops sexual identities as unique as snowflakes. Society has two cookie cutters for everyone. Good luck with that. Because at the end of the day, we are who we are. Moralizing is a puff of smoke, against the granite reality of our many past lives.

When someone feels like a man in a woman's body, or the opposite. It's because they most certainly are, men, women, girls, boys, grandmothers and grandfathers. All of their previous lives, hovering behind a paper thin veil.

"Let's get back to past lives. Interactions with others become more complex. Societies and cultures gradually evolve, with accelerated growth for all concerned. Our lives today are exponentially more difficult, than our hunter-gatherer days. There's considerably more involved than eat and keep warm.

Libraries and schools finally came along. We started building on the lessons of the past. Sharing the sum of our collective knowledge. Somehow we all navigated that convoluted maze, and created our modern human civilization. It is an aggregate composition built from countless challenging lives.

There are many daily phenomena related to past lives. One is that emotional highlights can penetrate the memory blocks. I was a little girl living in an island culture, when I fell off a boat and

drowned. I remember it like it just happened, right until I left that small body. Another example is multiple personality disorder. It's divine grace we don't remember our past lives for now. Love at first sight is past life related. And those we immediately feel comfortable, or uncomfortable with. Places and eras that seem familiar, when we read a book or watch a movie. Many Americans enjoying today's prosperity, had a hand in it's turbulent beginnings."

I pulled up my pant leg, showing scars on my calf, "I died in a war in my last life. These scars are a shadow of what happened to my leg. They just appeared when I was young. Things like that sometimes pass though, when our physical aspects are transferred. Before I give you an example, is there anything you want to ask?"
"Not now."
"If I happen to say old business, I mean something from a past life. I'll be the example. I remember bits and pieces of early lives, mostly eat or be eaten. At the zoo I said the tiger ate me. She did, our bodies were more primitive back then. No hard feelings. I killed and ate anything I could, just trying to survive. It's sacred beyond words we commune after all this time, having both achieved spectacular growth. It reflects the value of the process.

"Now here's a little of my history, how I ended up on this bench with you today. We were crawling through small access tunnels at work. I already knew I had a fear of small spaces, so I decided to investigate. I recovered a memory of dying in a mine. That took a while and actually became very spiritual. Maybe it was the lack of oxygen, faced with the certain knowledge my life was over. I got more of that one without trying, and it was pretty much a failure.
Around two thousand years ago, I was a miner living in a primitive mountain village. The conditions in the mines were terrible. We crawled through a maze of tunnels with nothing but flickering torches. Deaths were so common no one paid any notice. I was coarse, and drank myself into a stupor every night. Elbow to elbow with my fellow miners. I died young and left my family in wretched conditions, all to die soon after. You were one of my daughters, the only thing in the world I truly cared about. Not enough to stop being a drunk though. I had some real fun in the astral after that one.

"I felt miserable at my life review, I had always done much better. The counselors suggested a life of discipline. So I spent my next life as a nun in a religious order, you were there too. That was a turning point for both of us. We liked the results and decided to build on them.
The next time we lived in Greece, when the Romans ruled the Western world. Our lives centered around a school. I got some of those memories near the end of a six week fast. One of the entrance tests for that school was a forty day fast.
By then our astral bodies were well developed. That's when we got serious about our thought bodies. There were many books and classes involved. It was the first worldly education for both of us, since the days of Atlantis. We rose through the ranks and climbed a staircase of initiations. The higher ones included knowledge of our energy systems, and the conscious use of our astral bodies. We also started improving the connections between our bodies.
In time we became teachers ourselves. I eventually became a librarian, that was a special honor of trust. There was a secret archive of ancient knowledge. I spent many long nights, poring over those treasures from the past.

"We'd have been killed if the Romans found it, because Emperor Constantine had just invented Christianity. Which meant kill everyone who didn't jump on the bandwagon. I guess he never read the book his priests concocted."
Val was wondering.
I asked, "What would you like to know?"
"Didn't Jesus start Christianity?"
"He set the wheels in motion. You might say he lit the blast furnace, to further purify the ore. Do you

want a quick overview of Christianity? It is critical human history, because it shaped the last two thousand years in the Western world. But I must warn you, humanity's story to this point is rarely pretty."
She nodded.

I shared, "World Teachers are advanced beings who come as missionaries, in a supreme act of service and sacrifice. We're about due for another, which is fun to think about. Then Christianity will fade into another dusty historical artifact.
Jesus and his cousin John were members of the Essenes, an enduring noble spiritual group. They preserve the inner Judaic knowledge.
The surface religion was run by corrupt greedy priests. Like always there were good and bad factions. The bad ones suited the Roman overlord's purpose. So they had the upper hand right then.
Jesus thirsted for knowledge and sought out the highest truths. He went to India and even up into Tibet, on a relentless spiritual journey. He left his hand prints there. Tibet is an interesting place to visit in the astral. It's the most spiritual region in the world that I've seen. There's a lot more to that place than meets the eye.

"Jesus was not just reading and listening, he put in the work. Fasting was an Essene tradition, so were the secrets of our energy systems. There were many living saints in the Himalayas and still are. He drank deeply from the pure spring of spiritual knowledge. He connected to his higher selves and became enlightened.
Of course he shared his knowledge freely and courageously. But that undermined the money grubbing, power structure of the dark priests. We know how that turned out, and all he ever taught was Love and the unity of all things. A beacon of light in a dark place. The Essenes faithfully preserved his teachings.

"A very long time after that, something like four hundred years. The Roman empire was crumbling. Constantine wanted some way to control his highly diverse subjects. The military approach was very expensive. He needed a dog and pony show, to manipulate the unruly mob. So he adopted a different strategy, psychology. His priests took a mishmash of things, from the many religions throughout the Empire. They created an incisive, button pushing system of fear, guilt, power and greed. You have to give them credit, it's still going strong 1600 years later. Some of the teachings of Jesus were included, but they left out key concepts like reincarnation. Because it didn't promote their goal of global domination.
History is incorrect, suggesting the Roman Empire ended fifteen hundred years ago. The Roman Empire reorganized and reinvented itself. It's still going strong as the Catholic Church. All of the money, without all of the overhead of running a country. It's ingenious in a diabolical way, because it's nothing but smoke and mirrors. They changed their domineering tactics. From soldiers following the latest inbred emperor's whims, to a Pope's edicts. The self-proclaimed representative of God on Earth.

"What arrogant goofballs, asserting they arbitrate for Love. Everyone has direct access to Love, no intermediary is necessary. All that will do is restrict your access. It would all be hilarious, if there wasn't such a shocking chronicle of pitiless atrocities. They should go stand on the sun and debate their authority. The sun is responsible for the presence of Love, not self-deluded con men. They are claiming they are the official mediators of the divine forces. A little kid standing up in his crib, insisting he is in charge of the world. They are lost in their own lies here, just wait until they sink in the astral. Because they know the message Jesus taught, but they corrupted it into a political money machine.
With Christianity like everything else, the Romans were only interested in greed and power. Their redesigned empire dominated the West for a thousand years. With terror, intrigue, murder and mayhem. I like the quote from Pope Innocent the Third. When he sent his army to slaughter twenty-

thousand men, women and children in France. The commander asked, how they could distinguish the believers from the dissenters. The answer was, 'Kill everyone, God will know his own.' If he was innocent, I would hate to meet the guilty one.

"As always there are two sides to the coin. The goal of unifying everyone with a common religion, worked very well. And led to our modern day Western world. Ideally, a religion is a man-made bridge to the spiritual. An organized attempt to understand the infinite. Also a moral framework to create a social structure, an extended family. They are like forms for pouring concrete. Necessary at first, but then they are in the way and need to be removed. The tipping point for each person, is when thought takes precedence over emotions. The emotionally driven illusions are no longer effective.

There is a big difference between an emotion based life and critical thinking. The remarkable difference between the astral and thought worlds. The button pushing only works, on those who are emotionally self-centered. They look at the world through, it's all about me glasses.

Despite the evil ambitions of Constantine and some of the popes. Christianity has brought great light into the world. Not because of greedy Cardinals, despite them. Thanks to the pure intentions and sacrifice of countless true believers, noble priests and nuns. You asked if Jesus started Christianity. Their lifelong inspiration is his light, filtering through the cracks of the man made edifice. There is also a very bright side to Christian history. Like the Franciscan Order and countless others who fearlessly walked the walk.

"Let's get back to past lives. That was our political situation during those lives in Greece. Our country was a subject state to the ruthless, self-serving Romans. Instead of basking in the upper realms after we finished. We made a quick turn-around, to keep our momentum going. We knew exactly what we wanted to do. The most advanced esoteric schools were in Asia, so that's where we went.

You were my teacher and lifelong best friend. Over time and through countless adventures, I grew to stand at your side. For one hundred years we wandered far and wide across the globe. During that time we disguised our true identities. Taking jobs as laborers, teachers, sailors, healers, traders and many others.

We eventually returned to the monastery. To fulfill our obligations to teach, as we were graciously taught. That was the secret to the exhaustive knowledge of our Order. Each returning member added their worldly experiences, learning and wisdom.

"Then we each had one life separately, to tie up some loose ends and pay off old debts. I was a minor noble in France during the middle ages. Do you know about the Templar Knights?"

Val shook her head.

"They are a highly organized, global organization of true believers. Formed somewhere around the year 1100, during the crusades. When the Muslims reclaimed their countries after the crusades, the Templars retreated to France. But they had an effective network of communication throughout Europe. Which gave them a real edge, because they could leverage their current knowledge politically. Their new battles were palace intrigue and backroom deals. As a matter of musical interest, Claude Debussy and Erik Satie were Grand Masters. Franklin and Jefferson also got involved during their Ambassador tenures.

"There were two factions within the group, there probably still are. Those that followed the timeless spiritual knowledge. And those more interested in worldly authority and acquisitions. My father in that life was associated, but not a member. Which led to me being involved in the same way. Their interest in me, was related to a collection of ancient books and scrolls. I inherited them and further increased the collection. They were historical and spiritual knowledge, all considered heresy by the Pope.

The Catholics continued the Roman tradition of destroying any knowledge, except their own hypocrisy. They pursued that with vigor by deliberately perpetuating the dark ages. Their global

domination strategy, was to completely extinguish the light of knowledge. The other benefit was stealing anything they wanted. If they liked an estate or even whole towns, they accused the owners of heresy or witchcraft. Which by their own decree, entitled them to kill the owners in some horrific fashion. In order to promote terror, and streamline the process with future victims. After they murdered the owners, they commandeered the property in God's name. Gradually building the ill-gotten Catholic empire. The whole time preaching about the brotherhood of man.

"Their tactics worked very well for a thousand years. Until the Black Plague disrupted their power structure. Which was cosmic justice. Inciting fear was their stock in trade, so they decided to persecute house cats for some demented reason. In doing so they upset their own apple cart. Killing off the cats, led to the proliferation of rats. The plague was spread by fleas that lived on the rats. In seven years one third of Europe died horribly, as a direct result of their evil influences.
Intrigue within the Templars, led to me being questioned about the archives. It was also a good excuse to steal my estate. They claimed that being unmarried, was positive proof I consorted with men. That lasted a few miserable days, then I was a free bird again.
The big picture of all that for me, was paying off a lot of old business fast. Instead of several less rigorous lives, one that was crunch time. You wouldn't believe the bills still left over from Atlantis. Especially as soldiers, we were brutal. I had tortured people. That guaranteed that someday, I'd feel the other end of a red hot poker. Which means some more cosmic irony. Torturing me to death was actually helping me, from the darkness comes the light.

"While I was doing that, you were also resolving old business. We were both regrouping and doing some serious house cleaning. In our present lives we are reaping the benefits. Sometimes the quickest way forward is a step or two back.
Our short lives after that were here in the New World. There was a big new project by the Earth coordinators. It involved starting a new country, where people could choose their leaders. Instead of the flawed concept of nobility. It fit our life goals of wanting to pay off old debts. Because there are big bonus points, from willing participation in the coordinator's plans. And you get preferred placement in the future, for helping get things started. We were brother and sister, I was the sister. We died together as young teens during the Revolutionary War. We willingly sacrificed ourselves for others. That one finally freed us, from further participation in wars.

"I'll tie all of this together by pointing out things from my life. Things that reveal a previous game plan. I was fascinated with balance, that was the key to success. The sledding incident and all that followed. Family relationships that prompted me to accept a job far away. A job that put me close to your public presence. We challenged our love to beat impossible odds, to find each other again. We played a divine game of hide and seek, and we won."
We hugged and cried happy tears for a while. Regaining my composure I added, "Right now we are establishing continuity between lives, while we are still in the physical world. It is a milestone that has taken countless lifetimes. Definitely a moment to be savored and cherished. Let me say this to finish. Anyone who examines their life closely will see a pattern. Like breadcrumbs leading them in the right direction. Can I answer any questions?"

She thought for a moment, "Can I learn about my past lives?"
"Yes our memories are perfectly intact, because they are indestructible. What keeps them hidden are powerful hypnotic suggestions. To access the memories, we only have to get around those suggestions. There are two approaches I know about. The first one is like methodical research, using meditation. The second is more hands on, by using your astral body. Our astral memories are accessible, but they are different because they are based on emotion. Either approach would require some effort on you part.
For the meditation path, plan on a daily commitment of an hour. Thirty minutes meditating, but you

have to warm up and cool down. Shifting gears might be a better description. I go right to that from yoga, which works best for me. If you're fortunate enough to have a serene spot. You'll be halfway there already.

"Using your astral body is the other approach. That's not really that hard, and it opens up many other possibilities. But it's a lot like when we first left our playpens. Our world gets a lot bigger real fast. Meditation is the kiddy pool, the astral is the deep end. I will also give you a fair warning, much of accepted history is false. You will soon find yourself at odds with many consensus beliefs.
Here's something else to consider. When I decided to pursue it, I thought it was going to be lots of fun. This is the reality. The strength of a memory is based on the amount of emotion. What you will encounter first, are the emotional high points of a life. Most of mine have been dying. I was terrified, being chased through the woods at night. Then caught and eaten. A sword went through me in the middle of a fierce battle, things like that. I had to take it slow, but it got easier each time.
I noticed something interesting when I was falling, drowning too. It was like a very fast life review. Those are memorable ways to leave, because you know what's going to happen. Everything almost stops and the seconds seem like days.

"If you keep at it you can dig further into a life. Finding useful things about your current life. It's like researching in a library. One thing leads to another and you put the puzzle together. Sometimes you find a gem in the rock pile, a moment of Love. Those memories are completely different, they have a spiritual quality. Somebody helping you, or you helping someone else. An epiphany, or a supernatural event of a positive nature.
There's another thing to think about. This happened to me, I don't know if it happens to everyone. After I began, it took on a life of it's own. I get things at all hours of the day, usually something causes it. A picture in a magazine or a certain color combination. I was walking past some gardenias, the fragrance caused an experience. It was only a few seconds but it seemed much longer. Astral sex worked, I would be happy to help with that approach. What I'm trying to say, I'm not sure you can close the door once you open it. That's something else to think seriously about. So what do you think, did I manage to scare you off?"
She laughed, "No, but the time isn't right. I'll be thinking about it. Thank you for telling me that, it's some interesting food for thought."

I smiled, "I hope I didn't overtax you."
Val smiled back and kissed my cheek, "Thank you for taking the time to tell me these things. I've always known there was much more to life. I would have looked for the answers, if I had just known where to start. The best things I could find were books about unexplained events."
We stood and stretched, then walked around the lake holding hands. We were tired when we got home. But decided to stay up then go to bed early. After a simple dinner we relaxed watching an old movie. The story was about what happened after a man died, and it was surprisingly accurate.

At breakfast I asked, "Would you mind telling me about your husband?"
She smiled bravely, but tears were welling in her eyes. After composing her thoughts she began, "We were high school sweethearts, then we went off to college together. Both of us had scholarships and our parents were helping too. We lived in the dorms until our senior years, when I got pregnant. Then we got married and moved into a little place. He had a job in a factory. They let him change shifts if he needed to, because we were both still in school.
About a month after we moved in. I was tapping my foot, waiting for him to get home from work. A police car pulled up instead. My husband had crashed his motorcycle, and died instantly."
Val paused for a bit then continued, "Of course I was devastated. I cried and cried until I fell asleep, and then I would wake up still crying. That went on for several days. Then one night I saw blood in the toilet. I went straight to the hospital, but I still lost the baby. I could no longer have children either,

because of complications.
Although I was very close to graduating, I never went back to college again. I just didn't have it in me. After that I moved back in with my parents and started working full-time. This house was theirs. I put one foot in front of the other, just trying to make it through every day. Things gradually got better.

"A few months later my father was welding at work. He was killed by an explosion. My mother was never the same after that. We lived here together until two years ago, when she passed away." Val looked down at the table, trying not to break down in tears. I led her to the couch and held her as she cried.
After a time I helped her to bed. As I tucked in the covers I said softly, "I'm thinking of something that might help."
Val looked at me, blinking the tears from her eyes.
I suggested, "I want you to think about this and decide for yourself. It's just an idea. What I was thinking, you could sit on your porch that morning. Right before dawn would be the best time. Calmly think about him, the fun you had at the fair, laughing together, dancing. If you do that, I promise you he will come to visit. But I don't know what will happen then."
I kissed her and told her I loved her. Then quietly left for my apartment, still crying myself until I finally fell asleep.

The next week I went to Val's at sunrise. She welcomed me with a hug and a kiss. I brought flower starts in trays. We put them on the back porch with a sprinkle of water. After breakfast at the diner we went to feed the geese. I wondered what happened but made small talk.
When she was ready she began, "I had decided not to sit on the porch. But I woke up early that morning and changed my mind. Soon after that I knew he was there with me, that he had been waiting for me. I had my eyes closed and started to feel what he was thinking. More like pictures than words. He was upset, but happy I thought of him. The longer I sat there, the better I understood. He wanted my forgiveness, for leaving me alone like that. He was speeding and a dog ran out in front of him. He felt like it was his fault.
I let him know, I never blamed him. I could feel his love and I sent him mine. After an hour I realized he was gone. You were right, because I feel better. It was like I locked everything in a box, and buried it deep inside. I think we helped set each other free from that tragedy. Thank you for suggesting that."

We stood and hugged then sat holding hands. I asked, "Do you remember when I mentioned, everything is connected? It is, all of it. Not just on Earth, everything. It's done with the infinite power of Love. You communicated with your husband using that force, you're connected to him and everything else. Distance and time are not factors. Sometimes we get a glimpse of that connection, watching a sunrise or flowers on a spring day. Am I making any sense?"
"Yes, it explains everything. Why can't we always feel it?"
"Love is everywhere, always. But we are cut off to a great extent. If we were completely cut off, we would disappear. Because Love sustains the universe. If I say an experience was purifying, I mean it improved my relationship to Love. By removing something that was flawed. Something that became a part of me over the course of my existence. Incorrect beliefs or unresolved emotions, wrong actions and decisions, avoidable conflicts and countless other things. The epic journey we are all taking, is a return to the ocean of Love. Accumulating precious treasures of experience on our way.

"The Greeks had an interesting concept. That we're all living in a cave, thinking the flickering shadows are reality. The true reality is a glorious world outside the cave. But we can't sit entranced by shadows, and be outside at the same time. Does that make sense?" Val smiled.

I asked, "Do you remember how you were communicating with your husband? If I ever say universal language, that's what I'm talking about. Everything has consciousness to varying degrees. Rocks,

flowers, park benches, planets, stars, everything. They are all in constant contact with each other. For the time being that's been suspended for humans. People abused that sacred ability, in pursuit of nutrition and in other ways.
Someone tells a rabbit, 'Hello there friend, why don't you come over and talk.' The rabbit trusts him, then he grabs it and kills it. The innocent must be protected, so people have been restricted.
As we develop intelligence misuse is common. Entire lifetimes are spent pursuing selfish or destructive ends. Many more lives must be spent, resolving each one of those mistakes. Intelligence is a very difficult mountain to climb. Sometime when you're in the mood, ask me to talk about intelligence. That's what this whole world is about, developing intelligence. We're all taking a class that lasts a few hundred million years."

I told her sincerely, "I'm so glad I can just tell you the truth now. I know these talks caused some uneasiness. Believe me, I know how unsettling it can be. But I felt that it would be worth it, if we could just talk freely. I hope I wasn't being selfish from being lonely for so long."
Val smiled and kissed my cheek, "I wish I had known these things all along. But I'm not sure that would have been a good thing, without you to share them." We hugged and kissed.
I added, "Let me say something about the universal language. To illustrate that Love is infinitely powerful. Just one of those pictures, can hold all the details of an entire lifetime. I suspect there's no limit to what they can hold. Used correctly, it will seem like you're experiencing the contents. You gave me one the night we went to the zoo. It contains the memories of our life together in Asia. It will take a long time to sort through it all, it's full of esoteric knowledge. It was your sacred gift to me, for passing the test of finding you. That involved a sequence of thirty-three decisions, testing my discernment and character. It was a graduation of sorts, and the valuable memories are the diploma."
"What were the decisions?"
"Some were about ethics and morality. But most were about how I would use creative authority. The first one is probably the hardest. Influencing others, pulling people's strings. That's a quick slide down a slippery slope. One mistake and the game is over. The further we progress, the more creative authority we have. Since we're playing for the high stakes of our souls. Failure can be very costly, even at the lowest levels. There is only one safe path through the maze, selflessness. Not using spiritual abilities for personal reasons, under any circumstances."

We sat in silence for a time. It was early spring, the wind was hurrying the clouds across the sky. I asked, "Do you want to go shopping?" We drove to the city, to shop and have an early dinner. Val slept peacefully on the way home, while I savored the beautiful afternoon. At home we unwound listening to music, then went to bed early. The day felt like it had been a week. I knew it was the end of one chapter, and the beginning of a new one.

CHAPTER 12 - FASTING

I hugged Nancy at her car, she was looking forward to the morning confab. We had a puff and caught up on the news. After reading the natural diet book, she wanted to talk about fasting.
I asked, "What do you want to know?"
"How did you learn about it?"
I collected my thoughts, "Some people call just eating grapes, a grape fast. I would not, I would call that a grape diet. For me, fasting means pure water only. Maybe with a few drops of lemon juice, which acts as a solvent. Just eating fruit or drinking juice doesn't cause a metabolic shift. Because you are still getting nutrients. Those are great powerful therapies, but they are completely different than fasting. Not consuming anything, causes our bodies to shift to internal resources. It's a fundamental change in out metabolism. And not just physically, energetically.
I want to say again, fasting is a powerful tool. Useful, but dangerous if done carelessly. It gives your body a chance to clean house, to remove the waste products. You would be surprised how much we accumulate over the years.
Two reasons for fasting are physical and spiritual. If you're interested, we'll talk about the spiritual kind some other time. What I'm saying now is about fasting for physical and psychological reasons. I say that because the two are inseparable.
How did I get involved? College had an upbeat, anything is possible atmosphere. I was wide open to new ideas. Most of my serious fasting was during my college years. Although I did some long spiritual fasts after that. I presently fast one day a week, and a week every now and then for something special. I was also exploring yoga, if you want to talk about that we will. Or anything under the sun for that matter.

"Let me set the stage. I was rummaging around in a used book store, and I noticed one with the intriguing title, 'Rational Fasting'. It was written by a German art teacher named Ehret. He's one of the luminaries in the modern natural diet movement. Ehret was so sick in his thirties he had to quit teaching. He'd been going to doctors all of his life, but just kept getting sicker.
He had an idea, 'What I'm doing isn't working, maybe I need to try something different.' After a lot of study, he realized what I passed along to you. Different foods leave different byproducts. What we eat has a dramatic impact on our health. In fact our diet is the most important influence on our health. Also on the aging process, even more than genetics.
Ehret started experimenting, eating this or not eating that. His doctors told him to have lots of milk and eggs. But he was just getting sicker. So he started cutting back and started getting better. He knew he was on the right track. His family threatened to put him in an institution, if he didn't eat what they ate. So he and a friend went to a warmer climate to pursue things further. Living on fresh fruits and vegetables, he started getting better. He began fasting to help things along. Eventually he not only got well, he achieved superior health.
Being a classic humanitarian, he started a clinic in Europe. Where he cured thousands of terminally ill patients, using dietary therapies. His catch phrase was, 'Life, is a tragedy of nutrition.' No truer words have ever been spoken. That book is how I started fasting."

I paused, "Do you want to ask some questions?" Nancy shook her head, Val smiled to go on.
"I was going to classes during the day and working in a restaurant all night. I craved some fresh air and sunlight. So I decided to try riding a bike to school, which was ten miles away. I was reasonably healthy, a five mile run was not out of the question. I went way out on a limb, trading my old car for a ten-speed racing bike. For three years that was my only transportation. This was in a much warmer climate.
I kept clean clothes in my backpack. When I got to school or work, I washed up and changed in the bathroom. After a month I was really getting in shape, after a year I was a dynamo. My diet was

mostly fresh fruit and vegetables, uncooked if possible. I was also doing yoga and fasting now and then. My point is, I was in very good health.
The better shape a person is in, the easier and safer it is to fast. Especially fasts longer than ten days. It's not the fasting that's the problem, it's the amount of waste materials. Trying to remove too much too quickly, will make us sick. In severe cases, it could be life threatening.

"If you asked me how to improve your health by fasting, this would be my advice. Pick a day and stick with it, so your body can find a rhythm. A day off if possible to get things started. On that day skip breakfast, do that for a few weeks. If you feel like it's okay. Skip two meals on that day, again for a few weeks. Work slowly toward fasting the whole day, on the same day every week.
As you're doing that, gradually replace the least healthy foods with the more healthy ones. Do that for a year and you'll be amazed at the results. You'll be a completely different person. In fact, appreciable changes will be evident in a month.
I can tell you from personal experience. There can be repercussions if you don't stick with the pack. Like Ehret's family threatening to lock him up. That's some twisted logic. His health was secondary, to them keeping their whimsical diet. Two implications to consider are social and psychological. Let's start with social, your friends, coworkers and family. For fun let me give examples from my life. Keep in mind, there are many complicated issues in a family.
When I was a teen I got a job at an orchard, the main crop was apples. But they also had twenty acres of peaches, and some cherries and plums. During the school year I worked twenty-five hours a week, except during midwinter. In the summer it was fifty, and I worked my butt off. It was getting into the heat of summer. I mowed ten hours with a push mower, at least two days a week. We picked fruit, climbed trees and ladders. Pruned mountains of branches and a variety of other farm work. The peaches were ripe and I had been eating lots of them. At least two dozen big ones a day. That was pretty much all I was eating, and I felt like a million bucks.

"At a family picnic Mom had made a chocolate cake. It did not appeal to me at all. In fact I would have gotten sick if I had eaten any. When I passed on the cake, she pressured me to have some.
I told her, 'I honestly don't want any cake.' Everyone at the table glared at me. I couldn't tell her the truth. Her cake was poison to me right then, and I would get very sick if I ate any. So I shook my head and left the table. You would not believe the ruckus that caused. Something like I had slapped her, I'm quite serious when I say that. She called everyone in the family. Implying I deliberately insulted her, by not eating cake. The family sided with her. That all resulted from simply wanting to improve my diet. I call things like that, social implications.

"In college I decided on a ten day fast, I was living some distance from my family. The last time we talked, I was planning to visit over the holidays. I called my mom to tell her I was fasting for Christmas. So I wouldn't be coming home. Well that was certainly not acceptable. Because she had already told everyone I was coming. If I didn't they would wonder why, and that would ruin everything. She ran the whole gamut of persuasion. From 'How much fun it will be,' to 'I won't forget about this.'
A little bit later it was my dad, I told him what I was doing and why. I wanted to know the true meaning of Christmas. He gave up, more strangeness from our strange kid. A while later it was my sister, with the same routine. It wasn't my not coming to visit that bothered them. It was because I mentioned fasting. Of course I should have just said I had to work. But what I had planned was very serious to me. And purity took precedence over diplomacy.

"That didn't go over too well with my family. Visits were chilly, if you know what I mean. After all, who was I to disturb their Christmas traditions. By wanting to know the true meaning. It's kind of funny if you think about it.
Fasting was purifying my social life. People can feel threatened by change. You find out who loves you, and who loves pulling your strings. Now that's an extreme example, but sometimes those

illustrate things the best. Do you see what I mean, about the social implications of fasting?"
They both smiled.

I continued, "Now for the psychological side. As your body gets rid of things, so does your mind. It is not a free ride, believe it or not they're all entwined together. Repressed and distorted feelings must be dealt with. They'll come bubbling up, if you fast you'll know exactly what I mean. Methodical progress is the key, baby steps.
There's something else important, fasting is effective with some psychological issues. Ehret proved that many times, he published all of his work at his clinic. I was fortunate to read some at a big library. As I've been saying, fasting is very powerful. It doesn't just give your body a scrub, it gives your whole life a scrub.

"You asked why I didn't starve when I fasted for six weeks. Given only water, a healthy person will take about sixty days to die. There's a common exception to that. Because of the incredible power of our minds. People sometimes perish much sooner. Because somewhere along the way, they accepted that as their unflinching reality.
There is a secret behind all of this. Food is not our primary energy source. It provides useful constituents, but only a tiny fraction of the energy we use. Most of our energy is derived from the atmosphere. Which contains special, highly charged particles. The sun creates those, and many other things that are not readily apparent.
That's also the secret behind the countless miracles of nature. Like bird migrations that require impossible amounts of energy. And bears hibernating for months, or the incredible spawning runs of salmon. Also people who subsist on very sparse diets, or the long fasts we are discussing.

"When I only drank water for six weeks, I actually felt better and better. Once I got over the hump, the first five days. You have to make a metabolic transition. The first time it's a challenge, but it gets easier each time. I planned it so I had the last week off. That was nice, because I got a chance to savor the experience. I did some deep meditation and learned some interesting things.
You get way out there on a fast that long. It was very tempting to just keep going, and leave this world behind. Not running from, running to. Toward a higher state of being. That decision took several days to resolve. As I unwrapped each layer, I gained in clarity. It was an interesting journey.

"The real challenge isn't fasting that long, it's coming back. Imagine you're in your car, and you're blasting down the open highway. Then you're stuck in traffic. Sitting at stoplights, taking an hour to move one mile. That's what it was like to start eating again.
For the first five weeks it was business as usual. School, work and at least twenty miles a day on my bike. I worked my way up to that six week fast. Ten, twenty and thirty day fasts, spread out over eighteen months."

I stopped and looked at Nancy, "I'm so sorry for meandering around, ask some questions."
"That was very interesting."
"Can you think of anything I can say, to help you personally?"
"No, not right now."
"Then I'm going to tell you the most interesting part. The most important factor in all of this, is your attitude. Not just with fasting, in everything you do. There's a practical law of reality behind that, like attracts like. If we have a bad temper, others who are similar will be attracted. That's the reality we create for ourselves. The same is true if we radiate Love. That's what will be drawn to us, that will be the world we live in. Now here is a key to successful fasting. For better or worse, that effect increases significantly when we fast. So it is very important that we control our thoughts and emotions. I was able to keep a busy schedule while I fasted, because I had a relentlessly positive attitude. Focusing on one thing for that long, is unbelievably difficult. That's why I did it, not for physical reasons. It

hones your will to a keen edge."

Nancy nodded, "Thank you for telling me all of this."
I smiled, "I suspect, that was more than you wanted to know about fasting." We all laughed.
I could see Nancy wanted something, "What else can I tell you?"
"I want to hear about the Christmas fast."
I laughed, "Alright, you asked for it. That one would fall in the category of a spiritual fast. Food isn't really the issue, not eating raises your vibrations. Do you know what I mean by that?"
"Not really."
"Then let me digress for a minute. Although the world seems constant. It's actually vibrating rapidly, trillions of times per second. In a manner of speaking, it's being created and destroyed at that frequency. Our bodies and our consciousness are also vibrating. Those unthinkably complex wave-forms, reflect the sum of our existence. Everything we have ever experienced. So that's what I mean by vibrations.
The goal of that fast was to increase my vibrations. Think of it like adjusting a radio, to a station on a higher frequency. Given the right circumstances, we could possibly transcend ourselves. We might even get a glimpse of a bigger picture.

"When I say spiritual fast, let me tell you what I did. Then maybe it will make some sense. Now keep in mind, I just came up with this plan. So don't go out and try it just for a lark.
First the hardest part by far, getting ten consecutive days off. By seemingly random events the stars lined up. I had a small efficiency and some privacy. During the ten days I only drank water, with a few drops of lemon juice. Just when I wanted something to drink. I didn't think about food, I wasn't hungry and I didn't have any mental cravings. Food just wasn't relevant. I was playing at the big table, and I was going all in. I wanted to know the true meaning of Christmas.
Every day I got up before dawn. After stretching and warming up, I went for a three mile run. I followed that with an hour of yoga, then an hour of meditation. After that it was fresh air and sunshine, until time for an afternoon nap. After a few hours of sleep, I got up and did the same thing. Except after the workouts it was fresh air and moonshine. I walked briskly in time with my breathing. Doing spiritual chants and things like that.

"Now I wasn't giving all this a halfway effort, I was really hitting it hard. I tried to think uplifting thoughts, it was great I loved it. That was my daily routine and I can tell you this, I had a large charge.
Christmas Eve would be the last day, I wanted to commune with the Spirit of Christmas. Every day I became more aware and vibrant. There's a classic meditation, it seems simple but it's very powerful. You observe your breathing, paying attention as you breath in and out. I had been doing that the whole time.
At sunset on Christmas Eve I sat in meditation, gazing at the night sky through my window. I went deeper into that meditation, a lot deeper. I took a few short walks, still focusing intently on my breath. I kept a vigil all night.
I thought that dawn would be the best time. A little before that I sat in quiet contemplation, in front of a window that faced the sunrise. By stopping everything, after all of that effort and focus. It shot me like an arrow to some heavenly place. I did commune with the Spirit of Christmas. And I would say, it would be worth a thousand times the effort."

Nancy and Val were smiling, Nancy wanted something.
I asked, "What else can I tell you?"
"So what happened on Christmas morning?"
"I learned that everything and everyone are connected. It's done by a miraculous force called Love. All things are part of single whole. What's more important, I got to experience that directly.
The Spirit of Christmas, is a slight awareness of that universal connection. Friends from high places

help make it happen. But people also deserve a lot of credit. An adequate description of the experience is impossible. Multiply joy times a million, it was life changing and purifying."
Nancy was thoughtful, smiling and nodding.
I joked, "Ah, good times." We all laughed.

I told Nancy, "Let me say something else on a different topic. Because I don't want you to get the wrong impression. The issues with my family, were the biggest favors they could have possibly done. I couldn't be there and here at the same time. And the most important thing I had to do in my life, was to find Valerie. Take me literally when I say that. It was my number one priority with no close seconds. That was my quest for the grail.
I had no idea where she lived, or even who she was. I didn't even recognize her when we met at the store. The whole thing was thoroughly impossible. Except for what I just told you, we're all connected by Love. Our meeting was not serendipity. Val and I found each other, because we were drawn together by the eternal Love between us." We all looked at each other and felt the Love.

A few weeks later, I met Val at the store as it closed. I told her the news over dinner, "I have to get on a plane early tomorrow. I didn't want to go without saying goodbye."
"What's the reason this time?"
"My boss said they're having a serious technical problem. It's costing a lot, and the big boss is not amused. So it's all hands on deck. There will probably be the usual meetings too. Those managers just love committees and meetings. It gives them all something to do, before the head out to the golf course."

On the back porch we watched the stars, enjoying the warm spring night. Val had changed since visiting with her husband, she radiated more light. I asked, "You're different, what's up?"
"The visit with my husband did something, I feel better inside."
"There was a shadow over your heart. It's gone now and you're considerably brighter. You almost look like a different person."
"The talks have done something too, I've been remembering things."
We lapsed into wonder, watching the twinkling stars. After a while I got up and knelt beside her. Resting my head on her lap whispering, "I love you Valerie."
She whispered, "I love you too."
I stood up, helping her from her chair. We hugged and kissed. I said, "I have to leave before sunrise. I don't want to disturb you, so I'll sleep in the guest room." She insisted I sleep with her, snuggling until we drifted off.
I switched off the alarm just before it rang, sneaking to the kitchen for tea. Val came to sit with me, we smiled and held hands. I kissed each finger, "I love you." Then it was off to the airport. I enjoyed the unique energy, heading out in the early morning. The sunrise was magnificent from the plane.
I sat next to a man, traveling to a Christian metaphysics conference. He was walking the walk, I knew he was my good deed. We talked about miracles and some other things. I gave him all I could without disturbing his balance. The flight slipped by in friendly conversation. He was fired up for his conference when we landed. As we picked up our luggage he asked, "Do you think we could keep in touch?" We traded numbers and said our goodbyes.

I cleared the airport, navigating the traffic to our Corporate facility. When I got to the offices, the big boss was there. We sat around the conference table, discussing the control system problem. I asked some questions then nodded, "Come on." After a stop by the tech section. We made our way through the factory to a control cabinet. Inside were over four hundred relays. I replaced a certain one with the new one I brought. The system indicators displayed an operational status.
I smiled at them, "You're good to go. Even better, I know how to prevent it in the future. I'll show you on the schematic." Their mouths were open. I confessed, "We had a similar problem at our plant, a

while back." We all had a good laugh together.
When there is a difficult, intermittent technical problem. It is nerve wracking, creating frustration and tension in the maintenance staff. Because lost production is lost revenue. If flying me out there saved one hour of downtime, it paid for the trip several times over. Resolving the issue brings everyone up, like winning a football game. In good spirits we toured the facility, the boss leading the way. He made up his mind about something but I did not pry.
I got to my room in time for a nap, regrouping for a Company dinner. The next day was spent in meetings, I was glad when they were over. There was another one the next morning. I knew they were going to offer a promotion.

Finally free, I went to a park and found an art show. There was a faint and delicate sound. A beautiful ethereal tone wavering slightly, calling insistently. It led me to a Native American gentleman, an artisan displaying his jewelry. There was a stunning amethyst pendant on a handmade silver chain. It was dark and flawless, he said it was from Australia.
When I left Corporate, my ambition was a present for Val. As I paid I asked if he could hear the stones, that broke the ice. His life was a spiritual journey, we connected. I mentioned the subject of removing flaws from gems. He was interested, but that setting was inappropriate. He understood and invited me to his home in New Mexico. To meet his family and pursue things further. I thanked him for the beautiful pendant.

A trip to California was not complete without seeing my herb pals. It would be impolite to pass the introductory smoke. Then they wanted to show me something, they were trimming a harvest. There was a room setup with folding tables. Populated by diverse workers snipping away. Reducing the plants into a salable product. If you do not know, trimming cannabis is miserable. It is sticky, acrid and tiring, the fun wears off quickly. Because it was illicit, the workers were making good money. Some were working on shares. The music was cranked up. They were smokin' and jokin', making the best of things.
Flying home, a mid-twenties woman sat beside me. I offered the window seat, she liked the aisle. I found an old math book in my favorite book store. There were various depictions of tesseracts. Those are to four dimensions, what a cube is to three.
The woman glanced at the book. I noticed her interest and handed it to her. She looked through it and gave it back asking, "Where did you find that?" The ice was broken, she was working on a math doctorate at CalTech. We talked about the practicalities of a four-dimensional reality. She was well on her way to good things.
I called Val from the airport. She had dinner waiting, it was nice to be home. Smoking out back, I described the mountains of weed being trimmed. She laughed and shook her head. It started sprinkling, we took that as an omen to snuggle on the couch. I surprised her with the amethyst pendant. The chain length was perfect and she adored it.

CHAPTER 13 - ANOTHER TALK

Val was upbeat in the morning, like everyone on their first day off. As we sipped tea I asked, "Do you remember drinking tea at the monastery? We practically lived on it."
She smiled, "It does seem very familiar."
"How about breakfast at the diner?" I hoped we would end up at the park, I wanted to talk. Our favorite booth was always empty. We had a friendly rapport with the waitresses.
After a pleasant meal we headed for the park. I kept food in my trunk for our geese friends. Val pointed, "There's your good deed." A goose had fishing line wrapped around a wing. I held her as Val removed the tangle. The goose was appreciative, sitting quietly on my lap and smiling.
When the geese wandered off I asked, "I would like to talk about something, is this a good time?"
"Of course, what do you want to talk about?"
I took her hand asking, "Will you marry me?"
Surprised she exclaimed, "Yes!"
We hugged and cried happy tears for a while.

Holding hands walking around the lake. I told her about my meeting, "The Company is building a new plant in Atlanta. They wanted me for the maintenance superintendent. It's being designed with the latest innovations, they thought I could get it all sorted out. I told them that relocating was not on the table. Because the love of my life lived here among her family." Val squeezed my hand and we stopped to kiss.
On the way home I asked, "When are you going to tell Nancy?"
"I want to tell her in person."
"That will be fun, I would like to be there."

That night we were relaxing on the porch. Val got tears in her eyes, "I sincerely thought I would die alone. Because I really didn't have an interest in finding someone. After we met, I couldn't believe you just walked into my life. My whole world changed overnight. When you said you were thinking about me all week. I should have told you, I did the same thing. Because you are all I thought about. But sometimes I wondered if it might not last. I thought about going back to my lonely life. I decided I would enjoy every minute, then cross that bridge when I came to it."
I smiled, "I know what you mean about lonely. I wondered many times if I would ever find you. The night we met, I knew you were my one true love. That we would marry and spend the rest of our lives together. I wanted to ask you right then, but I knew things had to unfold. You needed to know more about me, before you made that decision.
Our whirlwind romance reminds me of a flower blooming. I wouldn't change a second for anything, especially meeting in a blizzard. When I gave you my check for your birthday. I already knew, I would be giving all of them to you. I figured I might as well get used to it." We laughed and hugged.

We were glowing in the morning. I asked, "Do you want to go shopping in the city? I wanted you to pick out your ring." Off we went, we were in our own world that day. I sincerely hope everyone experiences that feeling. Val knew of a suitable jeweler. As we parked I suggested, "Your ring is in there calling, if you listen you might pick it up. Give it a try. Think of the ringing sound, that comes from tapping a crystal glass."
She focused but shook her head.
I smiled and said, "Keep listening."

We held hands as we approached the store. Val was listening to her inner voice. When I opened the door she looked at me and smiled. We strolled through the store, admiring the beautiful jewelry. Coming to the rings she stopped, pointing to a ring in a display case and smiling.

The clerk came over, "Hello, may I show you something?"
I smiled, "Good morning, we would like to see that ring please." She handed it to me, I slid it on Val's finger. The ring fit perfectly and was her heart's desire. We admired it on her hand then hugged and kissed.
I said, "Let's look at all of them. There might be one you like even better."
"No, we don't need to. This is definitely my ring, it called me. I know what you were saying in the car. Okay, now it's your turn."
I fooled around looking confused, going to watches and necklaces. Then I winked and went to the rings, with my palm over the display. There was a warm pleasant itch that led me to my ring. A simple gold band, I loved it and it loved me.
The clerk was watching and wondering. I smiled, she came to get the ring. We arranged to have "I Love You Valerie", engraved inside. Then paid and thanked the clerk. She felt the true love and gave us a big smile.

Back in the car I asked, "What did the ring sound like to you?"
"Like you said, only more refined. I heard other things faintly, what were they?"
"Other gems maybe, rubies and emeralds are good. For some reason I like the tone of amethyst. Expertly cut diamonds are the loudest for me. That's why I hoped you would hear yours.
It all has to do with harmonics and beat frequencies. You and that ring are harmonically compatible, you resonate with each other. That's the ringing sound that only you hear. Those specific frequencies become additive. So each of you gives the other a boost. More simply put, you love each other. You and I do the same thing, because of our countless shared experiences.
The ring will be made sacred at the ceremony. I'm not certain but it's a good bet. This is the last rodeo for that gem's spirit. After an eternity in the mineral kingdom, it will finally advance. From being in your energy field, and even more important your mutual Love. Believe me that's nothing trivial, angels sing when those things happen."

I kissed her cheek, "Who says science and romance aren't compatible."
She laughed and we hugged.
I remembered something, "The next time we're at the zoo, we'll go to the museum. Do you remember the gemstone and mineral collection? That's one of my favorite things there, listening to their tones."
It was time for lunch I asked, "Do you want to get a bite to eat?"
"Yes, you decide."
"I know of a health food store with a lunch counter, would that suit your fancy?"
"That does sound good."
I introduced her to a favorite from California, avocado and sprout sandwiches. We browsed around, enjoying the upbeat atmosphere. Buying candles, incense and herb teas. As we left I asked, "Do you want to go to the zoo?"
"I was just going to ask you the same thing." We laughed.

There was never a prettier afternoon as we parked at the zoo. I said, "Maybe we can help each other, hear the universal language better."
She gave me a questioning look.
I led her to a bench, "Now tell me immediately, if you feel the slightest bit uneasy. It can be hard to sort out." Holding her hand and using our love as the connection. I raised our vibrations, then shared my perception. I thought something was happening, she seemed preoccupied. I gave her a questioning look.
She smiled back.
I said, "I've never tried this before. I want to be certain, you're not uneasy in the slightest."
She smiled, "There's no problem as far as I can tell. Let's go see what happens."

We held hands strolling through the beautiful gates. Inside Val said in anticipation, "This should be fun." I had a much better signal when we held hands. What innocent fun we had, sending greetings to the animals. Receptive ones came closer to investigate. With a few we had basic conversations. I was happy I had someone to share my life. Val looked at me thinking the same thing, we stopped and hugged.

Wandering impulsively we soon neared the elephants, our friend saw us. No preparations were necessary, we all shared a pleasant conversation. He was in good spirits and had been looking forward to our visit.

As we said our goodbyes he looked down the path, a class on a field trip. He sent, "Watch." Approaching the children he swayed his head slowly, looking carefully at each in turn. Strolling past them casually and then back again. Smiling and looking directly at each one. When he knew the time was right, he gave a mighty trumpet blast. The children were excited, he gave them another.

We smiled and waved goodbye. He agreed to the most noble life of all. A life of service, sacrificing his own well being. I said to Val, "Now I know why I was drawn to him."

We made it to the carnivores. Our striped friend was waiting, resting and slapping her tail on the ground. We shared greetings. She informed us she was going on a trip, to spend time with a gentleman tiger. She was looking forward to that and being a mother again.

We toured the botanical gardens holding hands. The spring flowers were in full bloom, waves of color in artful arrangements. The flowers radiated Love and musical sounds. Delicate and cheerful, we were entranced by the natural harmonies. Val and I looked at each other smiling. We surveyed the mineral collection in the museum. Enjoying the range and nuances of their tones.

On a bench near the gates, we sent Love to the people passing by. After a moment it all lit up, we watched in wonder. In a short while we stood, as we did the world returned to normal. Heading for the car in search of further adventures I asked, "Are you hungry?"

Val smiled, "Starved, this Love business is hard work."

I had lived frugally, saving and investing most of my income. Based on a persistent urge and a tendency toward austerity. California was a hot spot for technical innovation, the investments had flourished. That night at dinner I was happy, we had resources to start our life together. I said, "We've never talked about money, so let me give you my details."

She laughed, "I guess we'll be able to scrape by."

I winked, "Welcome to Fat City." We held hands and smiled. I asked, "Have you ever tried mead?"

"No, what is it?"

"A delicate wine made from honey, a high octane nectar. It's the most ancient fermented beverage known. I have a friend at work who makes it. He brought some to a party and it was delightful. The word honeymoon is a reference to mead. In the middle ages, a month was called a moon. So honeymoon means, mead for a month. Giving the newlyweds a month's supply was a tradition. To help sow the seeds of love. Monasteries kept beehives and made money producing mead."

Val smiled her understanding.

I added, "I think I'll ask my friend if I can buy some, to take on our honeymoon."

That night we had a waiter, he was capable and attentive. It brought back memories, when I was wearing the bow-tie and pouring the wine. I asked if he was in college, he smiled and nodded.

As we ate I suggested, "I want you to do whatever you feel is best. But if you wanted to quit working, that would be dandy with me."

Val had not considered the prospect, "That's something to think about."

"I'll be going back and forth to Atlanta until the new plant is finished. Now and then after that I expect, also to California every so often. And now there are rumors about one in St. Louis. You could come along when you want, we could have barrels of fun."

She smiled, considering the possibilities.

I suggested, "You could also spend more time with Nancy."
She said thoughtfully, "That would be nice."

I started another topic, "I mean this with all sincerity. I love your home and would be happy to live there forever. But if you wanted to buy a different one, that would be fine too."
"That's another thing to think about."
She asked, "When are you going to move in?"
"After we get married, no need to cause a neighborhood scandal."
She smiled, "I think that boat has already left the harbor."
"Maybe you'd like to see my apartment? There's not much to see, but it might be fun."
"I want to do that, I was going to ask a few times."
"I've never brought it up, because there's pretty much nothing there. Spartan would be a good description."
We decided to get married in the park, with Al and Nancy as out seconds. We tossed around honeymoon ideas but did not decide. What a lovely dinner we had, planning our future together. We left our waiter a good tip, he beamed his appreciation.

As we snuggled in bed I suggested, "I want you to plan our honeymoon and not tell me anything. Except what days to take off."
She gave me a mischievous smile, "I thought you would never ask."

CHAPTER 14 - OUR WEDDING

The next morning sipping tea she said, "You know, I think I'm going to quit work."
"That's the bee's knees. Why don't you put in your notice today?" We hugged and kissed.
She surprised me saying, "I read the yoga book, I'm going to start doing yoga."
I gave her a big smile, "That's great, you will be amazed how quickly you'll progress. You will notice good things within a couple days. If you like it and continue, you'll be a brand new person in a few months. So when are you going to tell Nancy?"
"Right now." She called Nancy, asking if she wanted to visit.

On the back porch Nancy and I shared a reefer. With the enjoyment of being with dear friends. Val said, "Oh by the way Nancy, there was something I wanted to tell you." For a good while after that everyone hugged each other. Val asked, "Would you and Al be our seconds at the wedding?" More hugs as you might imagine.
Nancy asked, "What have you got planned for the wedding?"
I said, "We want to get married in the park, on a Sunday morning."
"Are you going to have a reception?"
"We were thinking about going to town for dinner. You and Al are invited of course."
As Nancy was leaving she asked, "Would you want to come over on your wedding night? I'll cook a feast fit for a king." Val and I looked at each other smiling. She said, "Yes, that would be perfect."

We went to the courthouse to find someone to marry us. We explained what we were doing, the clerk's name was Linda. Smiling she looked at us in turn then said, "I would be glad to do it." We thanked her, making the arrangements.
A few weeks later, we went to the park an hour before sunrise. Val was beautiful in a simple dress, I wore a nice shirt and slacks. We sat holding hands in a timeless moment, watching the brightening horizon.
Al and Nancy arrived, then Linda with her husband. After greetings she arranged us in a suitable spot. Facing the sunrise with Al and Nancy behind. As the sun peeked over the horizon at the far end of the lake, Linda began the ceremony.

Val and I looked in each other's eyes, as tears ran down our cheeks. We had a few words prepared. I was wondering if I could say mine, but right on cue I regained my composure. After we pledged our love and devotion. We said, "I do," kissing as husband and wife.
We thanked and said goodbye to Linda and her husband. Then Al and Nancy joined us for breakfast at the diner. After a nice meal we went our separate ways.
At home we conserved our energy, wanting to be charged up for the dinner at Nancy's. After early naps we sipped tea and held hands. Looking in her eyes I said, "This is the best day of my life."

Driving up Nancy's street, there were lines of parked cars. We looked at each other with raised eyebrows. Nancy had invited Val's friends, Al invited mine. Everyone brought grills, desserts and covered dishes. There was a keg of beer and gallons of homemade wine. Folding tables held the food, folding chairs held the people. The hi-fi was outside and lively music filled the air. As far as I know, everyone had a splendid time. Val caught up with friends back to grade school, I was introduced to everyone. The whole night was magic.
As the feast tapered off, Mark began playing guitar. Val looked at me a little too sweetly, "I know someone else who can play guitar."
There was no talking my way out of it. I gave Val a wink that said, "Okay wise girl, watch this." I knew a beautiful love ballad, "Til There Was You", from Meredith Willson's play "The Music Man". After moving my chair to face Val, I played and sang that song with all of my heart. Looking in her eyes like

we were alone in the world. She listened with tears on her cheeks. When I finished I said, "I love you Valerie." By then, even the machinists were dabbing their eyes.
We stayed until everyone left, then helped Al and Nancy tidy up. After hugs and thanks we headed for home. On the way I was curious about our honeymoon.
She smiled and said, "You'll see." The day caught up to us, we snuggled ourselves to sleep.

In the morning we sipped tea, holding hands as husband and wife. I was on cloud nine. Val told me the honeymoon plan. She rented a cabin on a chain of lakes, a few hours away. Off we sailed, setting our course for honeymoon adventure.
In the last sizable town we stopped for lunch and stocked up on supplies. We found the cabin and sat on the patio. It was a postcard view of the lake and surrounding hills. We sipped mead and passed a reefer, soaking it all in. After a while we were ready for naps.
When we woke up we had tea and chatted. There was a balcony off the upstairs bedroom, we relaxed watching the sun go down. After a nice supper we returned to the balcony, to star gaze, smoke and sip mead. She giggled, "Now I know why they gave mead to the newlyweds."
After a while she asked, "I wanted to try something different tonight, is that okay?"
I smiled and said, "Whatever you want, is exactly what I want."
With an interesting look she said, "We shall see. Why don't you stay out here and watch the stars for a while." As pretty as the stars were, I was not thinking about them.
In a short time she opened the door, motioning me to come in. Stunning in sexy lingerie she said, "I left something special in the bathroom, I want you to wear tonight. But first I want you to let your hair down. Then take a bubble bath and shave your legs."
"Uh, okay."
She laughed, "Welcome to my world."
The shaving part is not as easy as it sounds. As I did, I wondered what I had gotten myself into. There was a gorgeous lingerie set, made from lace and iridescent material. I had to hand it to Val. Because I will be perfectly honest, it felt delicious.

When I opened the door, incense perfumed the air. The bedroom was dark except for candles. Val was sitting on the bed with her back against the headboard. Her hair was tied up in a bun. She stood and hugged me gently. Motioning me to remain standing, she settled back against the headboard. The flickering candles, incense and dancing shadows made the atmosphere intoxicating. In a stern voice she said, "I think we need to improve your walk."
I looked at her, she had a gleam in her eyes I had never seen before. It made me nervous, something was different.
She told me to model my outfit, I did so playfully. She said abruptly, "Come over here." I did and she said, "Turn around." I turned and she smacked me on my bottom.
It stung and I yelped, "Ow, that hurt!"
She said calmly, "Then I think you better stop playing around, and give me your best effort." I did, with my bottom stinging.
She said, "I don't remember working on your curtsy, walk over here and curtsy."
I did my best, but had never tried that before.
She shook her head slowly, motioning for me to come over and turn. She waited, then smacked me. Telling me impatiently, "That curtsy was an insult to women everywhere. I can see we have a lot of work to do. Now go back over there and listen, I'm only going to say this once."
I waited nervously, as she gave pointers on the perfect curtsy. Then said, "Now try it." My stinging bottom reminded me to give my best effort. She said, "That was a little better, now practice makes perfect. Go over in front of the mirror and practice." In a while she said, "Come over here." She motioned me to turn then spanked me.
I protested, "Ow, what was that for?"
"Nothing, I just like the way it feels. Now go back over there and practice." She watched, sipping

mead. Finally saying, "We'll work on that later, come here."

Sitting on the edge of the bed she continued, "I did see some improvement. But I know you can do better with some encouragement. Lay across my lap."
I did, and trembling I waited. The seconds seemed like hours, my tension was unbearable. Finally, she smacked my bottom hard. On the exact spot I hit the ground sledding, all those years ago. Stars exploded in my head. I heard a loud snap, there was a metallic taste in my mouth. I felt sharp tingles throughout my body.
Val knew something unusual happened. I knelt on the floor with my head on her lap. She bent down and hugged me. We stayed like that while things subsided.
I noticed something different, I was not hovering between two worlds. I was completely in my physical body, for the first time since I was young. I cried tears of joy, she hugged me compassionately. I lifted my head whispering, "Thank you."
In the monastery, kundalini awakening was taught to qualified students. Sometimes there were complications. In that instance, an Elder used that technique. It realigns all of the person's bodies.
My one true love did something, all of the doctors together could not. With one of the most mysterious skills ever known. She fixed the problem from all those years ago. She gave me a gift I did not dream was possible. We changed and went to sleep.

In the morning she was facing me, still asleep. I watched until her eyes opened. She smiled and said, "Good morning." Her eyes got big remembering the night before.
I kissed her, "You fixed me, I'm not shifting back and forth any more. How did you know how to do that?"
She smiled, "I was looking through the book, and I thought that might be fun. But I wasn't sure if I could get in the spirit of things."
"How much do you remember about our life in the monastery?"
She looked surprised, "The one thing I remember is drinking tea together."
"How did you know how to smack me like that?"
"To tell the truth I didn't. When you opened the bathroom door, another part of me had taken over. It seemed like I was watching myself from above."
I laughed joyfully, she joined me.
Getting dressed I said, "I really like your lingerie, will you wear it again tonight?"
She smiled.
I added, "That was fun last night, let's do it again sometime. And your hair really rung my bell. Why don't you wear it in a bun, when you're in the mood to where the pants."
She laughed and gave me a wink.

At breakfast I was enjoying my stability, thinking how much I loved Val. She watched as I impulsively cupped my hands together. Slowly parting them after a few minutes. A ball of intense golden light was in my hand. It solidified into a delicate rose, carved from amethyst.
I gave it to her, "This is a sacred gift, created from my love for you. You are my eternal friend, lover, companion, colleague and boundless joy. I love you Valerie." Her eyes filled with tears and so did mine.

There was a utility boat in the shed. We spent the morning exploring the chain of lakes. After following a channel into another lake, we spotted a marina at the far end. While a young man topped our gas tank. He told us about a restaurant within walking distance. We decided to eat lunch there. They had a varied menu and creative entrees. We enjoyed the meal, ordering take-out for that night. Including a sampling of confections.
Earlier we took it easy with the boat, exploring the shorelines. To get the food in the cabin refrigerator. We ran down the lake at top speed, enjoying the invigorating trip. The motor roaring and

spray bouncing off the hull. Back at the cabin naps where in order.

I woke up before Val, going out on the patio for yoga. Doing a physical culture exercise between each pose. Push ups, sit ups, jumping jacks and others. I was getting my running shoes as she was stirring.
Rubbing the sleep from her eyes she looked me over, "Mmm, I want some of that." I smiled, giving her bodybuilding poses. She growled and bit her fist.
I told her I was going for a run.
She laughed, "I'll be right here waiting."
The run was great, breathing in time with my steps. A trail with steep hills ran along the lake. The atmosphere was brimming with energy. As I chugged back to the cabin, Val was sipping tea on the patio. I told her I would join her shortly. We sat enjoying the sunset. The loons called, an otherworldly treat.

We smoked and sipped mead, mellowing out until nightfall. Thinking of something to do I asked, "Would you want to go out in the boat? It might be fun at night. If we don't get eaten by a lake monster while we're drowning."
She laughed, "If that's all, then let's go."
I rolled another one and off we went, taking the spotlight from my trunk. It was surreal on the lake. The shoreline was hard to detect, the stars reflected off the still water. We were moving in space, with stars above and below the boat. Distant lightning added another element. It was enchanting and supernatural.
Val warmed food from the restaurant while I lit the fireplace. After dinner we snuggled on the couch. Enjoying the flickering light of the fire. The storm front moved in, it was raining with thunder and lightning. She whispered, "I'm going upstairs, why don't you join me in a few minutes." I sipped mead watching the fire.

Upstairs Val lit the candles and incense. She was sitting on the bed, wearing that breathtaking lingerie. It was her turn to model as I watched from the bed. She was a goddess, I let her know how I felt about that.
After we recovered somewhat, we wanted a snack. The rain had settled to a steady patter. I stirred the fire and rolled a reefer. We smoked it outside standing under the eave. Watching the distant lightning, listening to thunder echoing off the hills. We sat at the table, nibbling pastries and holding hands. In the wee hours we retired to a restful sleep.

The morning was foggy with a light sprinkle. We shared a baklava, sipping tea. She squeezed my hand, "That was good last night." I squeezed hers back to say, "I agree."
She asked, "What happened with that amethyst rose?"
After kissing her cheek I said, "I was thinking about how much I love you, and that just happened. To tell the truth it surprised me too. I think I'm going to start experimenting. I've never done much, because I had enough problems staying on an even keel. I do know one thing though, you taught me how to do that. I've also picked up some things from helping animals. It takes a lot of focused energy, a scary amount."
Then joking, "Maybe I'll make a bunch of diamonds. Then we could buy a yacht or something shiny."
Her eyes got big, "I'm not sure if that would be a good idea."
"I was just kidding, that would be a very bad idea. It would start out loads of fun, but it wouldn't end up that way. Besides we don't own our possessions, they own us. Our time, our attention and our responsibility, three of our most valuable resources. And being rich is not all it's cracked up to be, when considered over multiple lives. Because then you will have to be poor to restore the balance. Unless there's some specific life goal, in my opinion it's better to follow the middle path." She smiled and squeezed my hand.

Surveying the misty day, we decided to brave the weather and go boating. We took mead to ward off the chill and the smokeless pipe. It was an epic adventure, exploring through the drizzle at high speed. After a few hours we were in a big lake, when I got a feeling. Slowing so Val could hear I said, "Good deed."

She looked around, then looked at me.

I shrugged to say, "Beats me." A small island caught my attention, Val followed my gaze. As we approached a wolf was sitting on the bank. We looked at each other, wondering what to do. Nearing the island I realized it was not a wolf. It was a dog, a beautiful malamute.

Maintaining her composure, she watched us cautiously with crystal blue eyes. In the time she was with us, she never made any sound. Her mind was going a mile a minute though. She was the most intelligent dog I ever met.

We beached the boat and got out. She was hungry so we gave her oatmeal cookies. We were pals after that, she smiled as we petted her. I said to Val, "She knows what to do, see if you can find out."

Val composed herself then said, "She wants to go to the marina."

I smiled and nodded my agreement. After pushing the boat out until it was floating. We encouraged our new friend to climb in. We poled out far enough to lower the outboard. The dog looked back and forth between us.

Speeding up gradually, we were soon heading for the marina at high speed. Our new friend was smiling, with her tongue hanging out. She was enjoying the trip as much as us, she also knew where we were headed.

As we tied up to the dock, the attendant approached smiling. He knew the dog's family, they had been searching for several days. He went back inside to call them.

While topping the fuel tank, we decided to eat lunch at the restaurant. The rain had stopped so we went out on the deck. As we ate a truck pulled up, our blue-eyed friend jumped from the back. A couple got out, coming through the restaurant to join us. Our furry friend took a shortcut, smiling and waving her tail.

They came to thank us for bringing their dog to the marina. Telling us her name was Rose, and they assumed she was stolen. They thought they would never see her again.

I told them where we found her.

They asked, "How did you know, to bring her to the marina?"

I confided, "My wife has a real knack for understanding animals. She told me Rose wanted to go there."

They both smiled, looking at Val with respect and nodding their approval. We had another high speed trip back to the cabin. After that adventure we were definitely ready for naps.

After we woke up we tidied up the cabin, planning on leaving early the next morning. We decided to have a real adventure. After dinner at the restaurant, see if we survived the long boat trip back in the dark.

At the restaurant a gentleman was playing Classical guitar. The fireplace was crackling and candles were on the tables. The atmosphere was rustic and subdued. The featured dinner was paella with a full course meal, everything was perfect. We took our time, enjoying the experience.

On the trip home we left the spotlight off. It felt primal out on the water in the dark. I covertly disconnected the gas tank in the middle of a big lake. Then pretended the motor conked out. It almost worked until I started laughing. I had an idea but it did not seem prudent, "Do you want to try something? Don't hesitate to say no."

"What?"

"Use astral vision out here on the lake."

"Are you sure?"
"No I'm not sure, that's why I want you to decide."
She thought for a moment then smiled, "Let's try it."
The sky was clear and the moon was a sliver, the stars were brilliant. The boat was rocking gently, it felt very familiar. I asked, "We were sailors once, do you want to try and remember?"
"Yes, what should I do?"
"Same as the park then I'll do the driving. Just stay calm and relaxed, and tag along with me. We'll see what happens." We wound things up until the air was sparkling, then further until time slowed. The water was transparent, we saw glowing fish below the boat. I went inside remembering.

We were sitting in the crow's nest of a cargo schooner. It was my watch, Val was keeping me company. We were both rugged men, lean and powerful. He took out a small box, there was a tiny pipe and hashish. We both had a puff then sat in silence. Swaying with the mast, surveying the dark horizon and night sky. The vessel creaking in time with the waves.
We were back in the utility boat winding down. I asked softly, "What happened with you?"
"We were smoking, on a sailing ship." I smiled and nodded, we both laughed softly. She said, "Wow."
In the morning I thanked her for the wonderful honeymoon. After tea on the patio, we loaded our cargo and sailed back to the world. Stopping for breakfast down the road.

CHAPTER 15 - YOGA

On the way home Val asked about yoga. After gathering my thoughts, "First, the word itself. The books I've read said it means to yoke or join. That's an obscure way of saying, join all of our bodies into one. To me yoga means to integrate and bring into balance. To establish balance within our physical bodies, then balance it with the others. So if I say yoga, that's what it means to me.
I rarely mention the word, for some reason it can make people uncomfortable. Fear off the unknown maybe? Anyway, boys are yogis and girls are yoginis.

"Generally speaking, yoga is thought of as a physical culture variation. Like some fancy stretching exercises. The branch for health reasons is called Hatha Yoga. It uses the poses and some other things. People noticed how effective it is. Not just feeling better, becoming a completely different person. But it was actually developed as a system of preparation. They were after some challenging goals like kundalini awakening. The various techniques associated with that are Kundalini Yoga. There's a branch called Jnana Yoga. That one emphasizes intelligence, discrimination and wisdom.
There's one called Raja Yoga, the king of yogas. It includes everything all under one umbrella, with particular emphasis on spiritual behavior. They know what they're talking about. What we are doing will greatly enhance our creative abilities. We would be well advised to proceed with caution. The ethical guidelines are not arbitrary. They are warning signs, pointing out treacherous areas. We are venturing into an advanced world as children. The standards for behavior will help keep us out of trouble. Think of it like flying a plane. There are definite rules that must be followed, ignore them at your peril."

I smiled at her, "You are already a Seva yogini. That's a branch that puts the spotlight on service. They might be the smartest ones in the family. Because they're storing their treasures in heaven. Their investments will multiply a bunch. I guess good deeds would go in the Seva box.
There's something to say about service. Our culture puts celebrities on pedestals. But the actual stars of this show, are the average men and women on the street. In one way or another, they chose a life of service. They know that will yield the greatest gains by a long way. As you well know, it's very difficult spending your life doing service work. Struggling to live on a basic income, constantly having to improvise and adapt." I smiled, "Wondering how you will get home in a blizzard. All of those struggles lead to accelerated growth. They purify us and bring us closer to Love.
There's an advanced branch called Tantra Yoga. That one uses sex along with other techniques. Although that sounds like a frolic, it is very serious. It's a Kundalini Yoga for two. Definitely not a game, the stakes are very high.
All of this got started in India a few thousand years ago. There's a rich and varied history and many notable figures. So there are some fun facts, any questions?"
"No, keep going."

"Now let's get down to brass tacks. As far as me, I just picked and chose what worked. I didn't much care about the systems. You might say I had already skipped to the last chapter. I focused on the poses, breathing exercises and meditation. That's what I know, and that's a good place to start for anyone.
So let's talk about our bodies. There's something interesting about muscles, they can only contract then relax. To be effective, they're arranged in pairs or paired groups. One set turns your head, a matched set moves it back. As we go through life those muscle pairs become unbalanced.
Let's say that you're a kid, borrowing some apples from your neighbor's tree. You fall out from trying to swipe too many. Of course you twist your ankle, so you limp around for a few days. It finally stops hurting and you forget about it.

"If you saw his footprints in the sand, they might not be symmetrical. One might be rotated further out or in. If so he's unbalanced. That will have definite effects on his life, all of them bad. He might avoid physical activity for example.
Another thing, since the bones aren't oriented properly. They will wear in their sockets, leading to pain and reduced mobility. Just like Nancy's hands, they're a perfect example. To add insult to injury, the misalignment in his ankle can cause a series of problems. His knee has to twist to compensate. His hip has to misalign because the knee is off. There are countless variations of that, and all of us have plenty. How can we possibly get all of those back where they belong?

"They were thinking about this in India, so they developed an assortment of poses. They will gradually move everything back to their optimum positions. It's simple and brilliant. You won't believe how quickly you will start feeling better. It's because you're removing hundreds of stresses, and moving toward equipoise.
Now we know how to restore our skeleton to the blueprint. What about the metabolism side of things, respiration, circulation, digestion and the other processes? If you think those are balanced, think again. Inappropriate choices of food, water with chemicals, polluted air, noise, stress, lack of sleep. We've got to figure out something for that side too.
Much of that is controlled by the endocrine system, a network of strategically placed glands. They secrete very specific compounds with countless effects. A little of this and you've got boy parts, a little of that and you have girl parts. Yoga has pronounced effects on our hormone systems. That's one of the secrets to the significant changes possible. Then you have the nervous system, with it's own assortment of problems. Then consider they're all interrelated. Everything affects everything else in the most intricate ways.
Unbelievably, yoga addresses all of it. Helping us toward our goal of getting it synchronized and balanced. Plus it's easy and enjoyable. If you're fortunate enough to have a good place to practice. It will be the highlight of your day.

"Okay, let's cover breathing exercises. I'm not kidding when I say, those are much more powerful than the poses. Some kundalini techniques are based on breath, leaving your body with full consciousness, becoming immune to the cold and others. It's very important to understand. With the breathing exercises, there's a lot more going on than is readily apparent. We are deliberately working with our energy systems. It's vital we take that seriously, like we would if we were handling fire. In fact what we are working with, is much more powerful than fire. Ethers are a full step up from gases, they have a lot more energy and organization.
When we are doing certain breathing exercises. We're working directly with our etheric forms. Common sense, patience and baby steps is a good approach. Something that works well for me, is breathwork in time with walking or working. It has a different effect, smoother and less powerful. But it's easy to overdo it that way, so start out carefully.

"Now for meditation, the basic idea of meditation is to control our thoughts. Which means we should always be meditating. The secret is that we're using our conscious self, to control our subconscious. So we can exploit those powerful abilities.
People are just like icebergs as seen from a ship. Only one-tenth is visible, the conscious part. We are mostly subconscious, that became necessary over the ages. When we first started out on Earth we were fully conscious. Our breathing and heartbeats were not automatic. We had to do those deliberately. Survival pressures made us push things like that to the background. Because we had bigger fish to fry, like not getting eaten.

"The word meditation covers a wide range of things. From dissolving tension, to achieving cosmic consciousness. It's a whole universe in itself. You might just want to center yourself, to stop thinking and trying to control everything. To just observe with an attitude of detachment. Or you might want

something specific, 'What's with these scars on my leg,' for example. You won't get a phone call, but sooner or later you'll get the answer.
Here's how that works. Our physical brain creates a request. When we go to sleep, the request will get delivered upstairs. The answer will be in your brain's mailbox in the morning. That's why it's so common, to wake up with a solution to a dilemma.
Now for the tricky part, checking your mailbox. You have to cut through all the racket from five physical senses. Also a nonstop whirlwind of uncontrolled thoughts. That's where meditation comes in. It helps us get in touch with out higher aspects, so we can get our answer.

"One whole type of meditation is mantras. Chanting phrases in a particular way, with focused intent. The mantra raises our vibrations and creates a carrier wave. A specific pattern that affects the forces in a desired manner. AUM is the most powerful one I know, it's pure and universal.
When we speak or an animal vocalizes. It has potent effects on our energy systems, as well as the surrounding atmosphere. Speech is powerful, singing even more so. Natural sounds can be used like mantras, a waterfall, waves at the beach, the wind, crickets. Toads are the best for me, frogs are a close second. Mantras can also help us connect to our higher selves. In some cases to other beings such as spiritual Masters. Prayers are the Western version of mantras. A church congregation singing, is another effective approach.
Here's another important benefit of meditation. It improves our will significantly, which gives us more creative authority. It doesn't just help our focus, it makes us more powerful. Then there's visualization and manifestation, resolving negative tendencies, past lives and many others.

"Now let's tie all of this together. The poses, breath techniques and meditation are a three-legged stool. They all compliment and benefit each other. The poses integrate our physical and etheric bodies. Breathing exercises integrate our etheric and astral bodies. Meditation integrates our astral and thought bodies. Yoga activates the connections between our bodies. That's what they mean when they say, 'to join'.
A friend saw me bend the rules and wanted to know how. I told them to do yoga and follow their heart. Our heart is the balance point between our higher and lower aspects. Following your heart is like keeping the wings of a plane level. Not only will your life be better, you will be more creative in the fundamental sense. Your ability to fulfill your aspirations will improve. That's the big secret and true power behind yoga."
Thinking that was about enough I said, "Ask some questions."
She joked, "You're a walking encyclopedia." We laughed and enjoyed the scenic drive.

She asked, "How do you think I should get started?"
"In the back of that book, is an appendix with suggested routines. Pick a beginner one and do it the same time every day. Find a peaceful place where you won't be disturbed. Your back porch would be perfect, I wish I had a place like that. We'll get you a yoga mat, they roll up and you stick it in the closet. You could do it on a rug but you might sweat a lot. Sometimes buckets if that's what your body decides. So you bring a nice thick towel, and maybe a fan if it's summer. A wide full length mirror is good. Comfortable loose fitting clothes are in order.
I would suggest that when you begin, don't worry about perfection. Just do the best you can without stressing. You won't believe how quickly you'll progress. Then read some more books and start working on the details. Like how you should point your toes a certain way, somewhere during a pose. Then you'll get the maximum benefits. You will be surprised how much you can perfect them, it becomes an art form.
Work your way up and never overdo it. Do not under any circumstances, force anything. Be patient and methodical, that's actually the most expedient path. If you aren't smiling you're doing it wrong.

"I should mention diet too. You should time your practice so you aren't too full. Two hours after eating

would be about right. If it was a salad maybe thirty minutes, you'll get the hang of it. Doing yoga first thing in the morning is good because of that. Your eating will change too, a half a sandwich will fill you up. You will crave fresh juice and salads. It's all smooth and natural, nothing to worry about. My advice would be gradual changes, instead of knee-jerk impulses.

Here's another thing. Just like everything else, what you put in is what you get back. You can have an intense session or a casual one. Sometimes the casual one is just what you need. Above all listen to yourself closely and honestly. If something doesn't feel right it isn't, back off and regroup."

Val was nodding and smiling, "Thank you for telling me that. I'm looking forward to getting started."

On a day off we went hiking in a nearby State Forest. It was a celebration of Val's last night at the store. She had started yoga, we both wanted some fresh air and sunshine. As we ate our picnic lunch I asked, "Wouldn't it be fun to live near a forest? We could wander out in the woods at night with astral vision."

She laughed, "I'm not sure that would be my cup of tea."

Driving home I got a tug, "My good deed is along here somewhere. I bet it's a car problem, help me watch."

Nearing an intersection I decided to turn left, in a bit down a country lane. We looked at each other, wondering what it would be. She liked the good deeds, they were always interesting and rewarding.

The lane ended at a locked gate between stone columns. I suggested, "Why don't you stay here and I'll look around." I centered myself, then followed the fence down the front of the property. Before long I knew I had gone past and returned to the car. Nearly there I saw something in the weeds, a "For Sale" sign. When I touched it the tug was gone. Realization dawned so I showed it to Val.

She got out and we looked through the gate. The property was overgrown, it had been neglected for several years. A large stone house could be seen through a grove of trees. We talked about what to do, deciding to find a gas station and call the realtor. A pleasant woman's voice answered, I asked if we could set an appointment. She was free to meet us in an hour. Val and I had an excited curiosity. The service station had a lunch counter. As we waited we had bowls of soup, speculating about the house.

The real estate agent was cheerful, her name was Susan. She gave us details about the property and the asking price. Susan unlocked the gate and we walked up the driveway, looking at everything with interest. As the house came in view, we smiled in anticipation. It was a well seasoned home, with ivy climbing the walls. Repairs were needed but it was not dilapidated. The footprint was a large rectangle. The walls were concrete with a field stone facing. It had generous eaves, gable ends and a slate roof.

There was a vestibule on the front. We went inside and Susan unlocked the front door. She waited as Val and I explored with the spotlight.

Inside was a great room, it went up two stories to timber rafters. There was a stone fireplace on one end, with a timber staircase on the other. The flooring was polished oak planks. A second floor began on the other side of the room. Climbing the stairs we found a wide balcony, running the width of the house.

The upstairs was divided into a matched pair of rooms. The side walls were shoulder height, with windows at regular intervals. The ceiling followed the roof line, up to the collar ties then across. At the far end we looked out a window, it gave a good view of the property.

The parcel was a square forty acres, mostly wooded. It sloped down toward the back, textured with rolling hills. A small barn was close to the house, a garden shed was further back. A pond could be seen through the trees. There were thick woods behind the property, the State Forest where we had been hiking.

Excited we went downstairs. There was a hallway down the center to the back. Under the balcony on either side, were base cabinets with bookcases above. They were finely crafted like everything in the

house. The walls were paneled or mortared stone. The doors, windows and trim were handmade.
On one side of the hall was a large bedroom, with closets across the width. On the other a tiled bathroom and a utility room. There was a washer hook-up, shelves, cabinets and a utility sink. In there we found stairs behind a door, leading down to the basement.
It was unfinished and big, the size of the house. The spotlight barely cut the gloom. A furnace and water heater were partitioned in a near corner. A wall ran across the width at the far end. Opening the door we noticed the wall was a foot thick, it was well insulated. Inside was a root cellar. One end had racks to store wine, there were hundreds of empty bottles. The other end had slatted bins and shelves, for keeping fruits and vegetables. Val and I looked at each other, smiling and nodding.

We went back upstairs to the rear of the house. The hall opened into a spacious room. One side was a kitchen, the other a dining area. Windows ran across the back and along the dining side. There was a window with a nice view over the kitchen sink. The tiled counters were open underneath, there were shelves above. The storage was in a long pantry. We smiled at each other, looking inside.
Another vestibule was on the back of the house. We looked in the barn, it was timber construction with a full loft. We wanted to see the pond but thought about Susan waiting. We discussed the details as we went. I asked, "What do you think?" Val looked at me with raised eyebrows, wondering what I thought.

We went inside then upstairs, to look out the window again. Taking a closer look at the pond and spotting a few other things. I asked, "We got here by following a good deed, are we supposed to buy this place?"
Her eyes were big and she was excited, "I love it!"
"I do too, but let me play devil's advocate. What about being so far from town? Would that bother you, would you feel lonely?"
She smiled, "No, I don't think that would be a problem."
"I can tell you from working in the orchard. Taking care of this place would be a lot of work. It would take several years of extra hard work, just to get it back in shape. That's why the price is so low. This isn't just a home, it's a rigorous way of life."
Val nodded, "Yes, you're right. What we have to decide, do we want to live that way?"

I looked at the pond with the forest behind, "We're facing southeast. This would be a great place for morning yoga. Look at that view, think how it will be when the sun's coming up. And someone used to pray here, it's the most powerful spot in the house. That would help too.
It's your decision, I'm good either way. I think the price is reasonable all things considered. Do you want to think about it?"
Val was listening and smiling. Then she said decisively, "Let's buy it, for some reason I feel like I've come home. This view seems very familiar and so does the whole house. I've felt it a dozen times since we've been here. If you told me this morning I would be saying that, I wouldn't have believed it. Now tell me what you think."
"It feels like home to me too, from the moment we parked by the gate. I didn't want to say anything and sway your decision. But I knew we were supposed to buy it, when I touched the sign. That didn't mean anything though, unless you were on board."

We kissed and hugged, retracing our steps to the front. We thanked Susan and made a cash counter-offer, to save the interest and paperwork. Driving home we kept track of the distance, it was eleven miles to the nearest grocery. We were excited at the prospect, anxious to hear the response.
The next day Val called me at work. She was excited, "The owners accepted the offer!" At home we made plans, hugged and kissed. Then started all over again. Sitting on the porch I asked, "What about this house?"
"Nancy is due half."

"Have you told her about the homestead yet?"
"No, I wanted to hear the response. Let's call her right now."

A few days later Nancy came over. We described the house and property, having our traditional morning herb fest. Talk turned to the sale of their parent's house. Nancy had been thinking about it since Val called. She said, "My son dearly loves this house, he spent a lot of time here growing up. Because Mom used to babysit when I was working. Al agreed we could buy your half, so we could give it to him for a wedding present."
Val said, "Good, then it would stay in the family." She was thinking something then brushed it off.
It felt like the right path, we were blessed and we should share that. I looked at her, smiling and nodding.
She looked surprised asking, "Are you sure?"
"Receiving and giving are two sides of the same coin. It feels right to me, it's your call."
She said to Nancy, "How about if we just give it to him."
"You're kidding?" More hugs all around.

After Nancy left I suggested, "Why don't you make the decisions about the house? And I'll worry about the rest of the property."
"You've got a deal."
Thinking about her being lonely I said, "That was a great reception Al and Nancy hosted. The homestead would be very nice for things like that."
She smiled, thinking about the idea.
"I could be a big help in the kitchen. Or do all of the cooking, so you would be free to be hostess."
Her smile got bigger.
After a bit I said, "We need to think of a name."
"Yes, we can't call a place like that, 'the house'." We suggested a few but did not pick a winner.

CHAPTER 16 - AN OLD HAUNT

Sipping tea one afternoon, we were wondering how to spend the fine evening. Deciding on the park to watch the sunset, then supper at the diner. A good crowd was around the lake, everyone was enjoying the nice weather. An hour before dark we settled on a bench. I asked, "Are you in the mood for an experiment? I've been wanting to try something."

"Yes, this is the perfect time. What do you want me to do?"

With a smile I kissed her cheek, "Just be you. I don't want to talk after this, so let me say a few things now. We're going to try to use astral vision. If it works, look at the people closely. Pick out the details, especially the colors. Then we'll talk about everything later. And don't look at me until I stand up, that might throw a wrench in the works."

We relaxed and centered ourselves. With the energy tornado approach we activated our astral senses. One of my favorite things was people watching with astral sight. They look like glowing colored eggs, the sizes and exact shapes vary. An average would be eighteen inches from their physical body. Rarely I saw someone with a large aura, like my zookeeper friend.

Inside the bubble was a bright layer close to their physical body. Inside that was a thin outline of glowing mist. Then more like a shadow, their physical body. The colors are the main thing, the person is an open book from the colors. They form patterns like stripes, waves and others. Intensity, dull spots and distortions are meaningful.

People were walking and sitting on blankets, we watched them with interest. I wanted to tell her specifics later. We relaxed, enjoying the marvelous experience. The real challenge was keeping on track. I was so happy to be sharing my life with someone. I decided to stand, hoping it would not break the spell. Because I had surrounded Val with my aura. I let go of her hand and stood, immersed in my joy I found her. I pointed to different features, she was smiling and glowing brightly. I focused on Love, then wound up a bit to get things moving. Her aura showed me it was working.

I helped her from the bench then sat, so I could see her properly. She was an absolute jewel, brightly lit with the most desirable colors. They can only be earned though many lifetimes of concerted effort.

She sat again, I wound us down with breath techniques. We started laughing softly. I hugged her and told her I loved her. Then we sat in silence for a time.

I said lightly, "That went rather well, if I do say so myself." Val smiled and squeezed my hand. We went for a walk around the lake. I mentioned things I noticed, while they were fresh in my mind. What the different colors meant, the layers and shapes. Asking, "Did you see that kid with the yellow glow?"

"Yes."

"He's well on his way, he would make an excellent friend. That couple with the red waves were having a spat. Those teens with that pretty blue around their heads are good students."

Val said excitedly, "That put all of the pieces together, everything you've told me makes sense."

The diner was packed, we had to wait a few minutes. When it was our turn, the waitress led us to our favorite booth. The nice weather had everyone in good spirits, the mood was upbeat. Friends from our reception were there and we enjoyed a pleasant dinner.

At home we sat on the porch, relaxing and watching the night sky. Talking about the new place I said, "It surprised me, you were ready to buy the homestead like that. It's a big step and a whole new way of living."

She smiled, "That's because there's something you don't know."

"Then spill the beans."

"I think it started from watching a movie. When I was a little girl. I had a secret fantasy, where I had a villa in France. It was surrounded by gardens and vineyards. Friends would come over for lovely dinners, of course it was my dolls back then."

I smiled, "That does help explain things. Our childhood dreams are very powerful because of innocence. They shape the course of our lives. Most people are who they are, because of seeds they planted as children." After a few minutes I asked, "How about this for a name, Valerie's Villa?"
She thought for a moment then said, "I like it." Smiling and giving me a kiss.
I said, "I guess if we're sharing secret fantasies, I should tell you some of mine. I've always wanted to have a nice kitchen, with professional cookware. Somewhere I could take things to another level. I want to make hearty entrees that don't use meat. With desserts that use natural sweeteners, like dates and bananas. I have plenty of ideas, and I've dabbled quite a bit already. I really like that kitchen and dining room. There would be plenty of room for a dozen people or more. We could have great dinner parties.

"Another dream is to grow my own fruits and vegetables. Using only natural amendments and fertilizers. I read an interesting book, 'An Agricultural Testament'. It really got me thinking. The author is an elder statesman of organic agriculture. The main idea was concentrated humus.
Something else is to have a greenhouse. I love the vitality, especially in winter. It would be nice to have somewhere for a good charge in January. The ones at the zoo gave me that bug. I'm really looking forward to growing flowers too, I had a few beds when I was little. The butterflies are pretty. They're like flowers that fly, I can watch them for hours."
"Yes, I'm looking forward to growing flowers too. I hadn't thought about fruits and vegetables. Al is a good gardener, he always shares more than I can use. Homegrown vegetables are always so much better."

I said, "I want to turn the barn loft into a shop. We'll be in the construction business for the next few years. It'll be great to build exactly what we want. Maintaining the equipment will be a big thing too. Grounds maintenance is very tough on equipment.
When I saw the bookcases in the great room, I thought we could have a library. I've always given my books to the public library. We could start keeping them. I know some really nice used book stores, you could spend days in them. The books are cheaper than dirt and we could have fun collecting them." We talked for hours that night, planning our new lives together. All of our dreams coming true, woven into a beautiful wreath.

Discussing the astral adventures we have while we sleep. Val asked, "Is it possible for me to remember mine?"
"Yes, almost anyone can. You have a serious edge, because you've done it consciously before in several lives. It's already inside, you just have to find it and dust it off. It's actually pretty simple, because we are swimming in a sea of potent creative energy. Just like with anything else, all you have to do is try. Then let the seeds grow and one thing will lead to another. The creative potential will produce a series of stepping stones, leading you to your ambition.
For this particular instance, want to remember, intend to remember. If you're in a big hurry, will yourself to remember with focused power. Use all of it, emotional, physical and thought. With practice you can bring quite a bit to bear.

"As always there's a catch or two, at least for me anyway. When I'm in the astral, my physical body looks like a puppet. Another thing is kind of creepy. When I get back in my body, it feels like putting on wet clothes. There will be some reality shock too, this world is gray and dreary after the astral. All of the new colors disappear and the others are dull. Everything seems slow and listless, almost dreamlike. It's like having to go back into a dungeon. That's one reason it's all hidden. That is actually a loving kindness for people.

"Here's something else, your world will expand enormously. And except with me you'll have to keep it all to yourself. That doesn't sound like much, but it's a very big thing. The life changing experiences

create a sense of isolation. You are literally living in another world."
Val nodded her understanding, "I know what you mean. I'm already starting to feel that, especially with Nancy. I want to say things but I can't."
"We'll get her up to speed. It's all got to unfold, give it a little time. For me, watching things blossom is the fun part. To paraphrase an old saw, the journey not the destination.
The feeling of isolation is one side of the coin. The other side is our basic desire to learn and grow. So it becomes the question, should we stick with the pack or reach for the stars?

"Now that we've read the cautionary tales, let me give you something to try. A way you can stick your toe in the water."
She looked at me expectantly.
"Do this for two weeks. After you're in bed and right before you go to sleep. Going backwards, review everything you've done since you last woke up. Remember your day in reverse order, does that make sense?"
"Yes."
"Now for part two. The very instant you wake up, before you even open your eyes. Do the same thing. Remember what happened since you fell asleep, in reverse order. And don't be even slightly discouraged if you don't remember anything. That will work against you. That's like digging up seeds to see if the plant is growing. Have fun then let the seeds grow.
Do that and don't tell me anything. It's very important that you make yourself do it every time. The hypnotic suggestions will kick in after the first time. You'll think up all kinds of excuses, why to skip it right then. You've got to push through and climb over that obstacle. A good tip is to be upbeat and positive. That is an ancient technique. It trains your mind to store your sleep activities, in your conscious memory. Because of the power of your creative will, trying to remember makes it happen."
Val was smiling, "Thank you, that sounds interesting."

Three days later she had a secret smile at breakfast. I knew that feeling, "You remembered something when you woke up, didn't you?"
"Yes, I had a vivid dream. The funny thing is, it seemed more real than after I woke up. That was a strange feeling, waking up was like falling asleep."
I smiled and nodded, "You're right, that is a strange feeling. What was the dream?"
"There was a herd of deer, grazing in a meadow covered with flowers. It was a beautiful summer day."
"Do you remember I told you, the astral is more real than the physical?" We smiled.
I said, "Now you know the difference between a dream and an experience."
"Then what are dreams?"
"Dreams are a number of things. All based on the fact, that thoughts and emotions are powerful seeds. One kind comes from our physical brain, it's trying to interpret four-dimensional experiences. Another is from collective thoughts, mass consciousness. Those can be very powerful. Another kind is like echoes, from things we were considering or experiencing that day. Others can be symbolic messages from higher up, designed to catch our interest. The common thread is that they are not literal, they are not technically experiences.

"Do you think you want to keep doing that? Or maybe wait a while and take baby steps. Do you feel uneasy in any way? Is it affecting your ability to function normally? That is much more important. Those blocks you're casually climbing over, are there for a very good reason."
"As far as I can tell there are no problems. I'll keep dong it for the two weeks. I've been wanting to try something like this, thank you for getting me started."

After the two weeks we talked again. She was remembering more of her nightly adventures. I asked, "Do you think you might want to go further?"

"Yes, what else is there?"
"After you've reviewed you day. Make your body fall asleep, but keep your mind awake. Here's something to get you started. But if you think something else might work better. Definitely follow your inner voice. In all of these matters, always listen to your heart. After you're in bed, get comfortable and deliberately relax. Lie on your back for this. Breath evenly and don't force it, like waves washing in and out at the beach.
Tense up a foot a bit, then let it relax. Do the other one then your lower legs, your hands then your arms. Work your way up, you get the idea. The goal is to relax your entire body. Do that all again, then maybe a third time. It will get easier and faster each time. Get so relaxed, you're right on the edge of falling asleep.
Then feel yourself stepping down a dark staircase, as you pay attention to your breath. With each one take another step down the stairs. While you're doing that, will your body asleep.
There is a blanket, being slowly pulled up from the foot of the bed. As it covers you toes, they fall sleep. Watching you breath and going down the stairs. Gradually pull the blanket up, all the way over your head. With some practice, you'll be awake and your body will be asleep. Again upbeat and positive, and don't worry about expectations. Have fun then forget all about it. We'll talk again in a week or two.
Let me add something, all of this might seem like a lot of work. But it's like cutting a doorway in a concrete block wall. It's difficult, but after that you can just step through. It takes me less than a minute to roll out of my body. So don't think you'll have to do the hokey-pokey forever.
Something else, it will be unnerving for your body to be asleep. Don't let it take you over, it's a very good sign. It means you're opening a door to a wider reality. You have to face your biggest fear, the fear of dying. That's actually a very good barricade. If you can control your worst fear, you can control your other emotions. Although that proved to be quite a learning experience. I had no idea, my desires were such a can of worms.
Here is the most important thing. In the astral, emotions can become a feedback loop. The astral is similar to a public address system. Your emotions are amplified, and then broadcast as a tangible reality. That is actually the best part. But it can also be the worst, if someone is unprepared.
A good example is fear. If something frightens you, the astral takes that and ramps it up. So you become even more afraid and that gets amplified. We're lucky, because at some point we wake up and break the loop. We're happy that nightmare is over.
It is very important to control our emotions, that is easy here compared to the astral. Those residents never wake up. If they created a nightmare for themselves, they are trapped. Unless they learned to control their emotions on this side.
Another thing, you might see bright lights or colors. Or hear strange sounds very clearly. Like a waterfall, or buzzing bees or something like that. You're activating certain energy centers, the lights and sounds are related to that. Again smile to yourself, you've got your hand on the doorknob.

"Now for the tricky part, unhooking from your physical body. That will be the critical point in this whole adventure. The secret is this, right now your consciousness is focused in your physical body. The goal is to move that focus into your astral body. The more you do it the easier it gets. I just roll over, like I'm rolling over in bed. But I leave my body behind. Something that might help, if you remember the night after the zoo. That vibrating feeling in your astral body.
It's just like tying your shoe. The more you think about it, the harder it gets. Don't think, just do it. Birds don't think, they jump off the branch and fly.
Here's a related concept. Where our consciousness is focused, is not fixed in any way. It's just a habit. You could move it into a tree or a bird if you wanted, assuming they were agreeable. Most are because they know they will benefit. Animals are not as possessive about their bodies, and they crave any kind of learning experience. Animals can leave their bodies much easier than us. Because that focus habit is not as strong.
Our thoughts have us trapped, but they can also set us free. When we realize all we have to do to

leave our bodies, is move our consciousness somewhere else. To do that, we must control our thoughts and emotions. That seems impossible at first. But like with everything else, practice makes perfect.

"I had an idea that might be fun to try. We should sleep in separate beds, so I'm away from my etheric form. When you feel pretty good about putting your body to sleep. We can coordinate things, and I'll try to help from the other side. But I've never tried anything like that, so I have no idea if it will work. The reason I think it might, is because you taught me all of this. Besides, you've done it every night your entire life."

She was smiling, "Thank you, that sounds interesting."

A few weeks later we gave it a try. I said, "Stick with it and I'll see if I can help. And no matter what you see or hear, stay calm and radiate Love. Nothing can hurt you. If you want to see sparkling rainbows, you'll see rainbows. If you want to see fearsome monsters, you'll see monsters. You will be swimming in a sea of creativity, based on desire. What you want is what you'll get."

We kissed and slept in separate beds. In a while I rolled out and went to Val, watching her body relax more and more. When I thought the time was right. I took her astral hand and gently tried to pull her free. It worked, easily.

We had planned to stay in the house so she could get adjusted. But as soon as we were out I got an idea, I knew it was from upstairs. I rose through the ceiling with her in tow. We stopped one hundred feet above the roof.

I tried the universal language, she seemed to hear but looked disoriented. I sent a picture, "Hold on." I thought I got through when she squeezed my hand. Holding her hand also I focused on a memory.

There was a sensation of blurred motion for several seconds. Then we stopped, hovering near the ceiling of a large chamber. Below us were seven people sitting in a circle. One immediately rose from his body, he was very good at communicating. Sending us, "Greetings."

I sent a picture of us lying on our beds. Then another, with us sitting in the circle like them.

He looked at me intently, his eyes shining with wisdom. I knew the memory blocks were nothing to him. He turned to Val and looked deeply in her eyes. Then focused and sent her a glowing ball, a gift of wisdom.

He sent a message to the students, they were looking at us intently. Unexpected astral visitors is not what intrigued them. It was because we were from the Western world.

He informed them we had been Elders of their Order, in the distant past. The students sent us formal greetings of respect, I returned them instinctively.

The Elder sent, "Welcome back."

I responded, "Our first journey together." Val's look made me think she understood.

The Elder sent, "Travel with us."

I answered, "Baby steps."

He nodded his understanding, "Come."

The other six had left their bodies and were waiting respectfully. Their teacher grasped Val and I gently with his will. We all rose through the ceiling and beyond. As we ascended Val and I looked down, we had been inside a mountain.

We all soared across the night sky. Over a mountain range, as Earth sped by far below. I looked at Val, she looked back smiling. We crossed a coastline, with increasing speed crossing an ocean. The large fish could be seen as if the water was invisible. We slowed as a glow appeared on the horizon. Crossing the coast we saw the lights of Los Angeles. The Elder slowed our pace so we could enjoy the sights.

In a while we were hovering over the house. Our guide relaxed his grip sending, "You are always welcome." Then he and his troop shot up to the stars.

I was still holding Val's hand, gently pulling her down to the bedroom. Then helping her reenter her

body. When I saw she made the alignment. I went to the guest room and carefully entered mine. From long practice, I waited a few seconds while everything settled.

I got up and went quietly to Val. She was awake, still lying in bed. Her eyes were wide and excited.

I asked, "What do you remember?"

"We went to Asia and back."

We hugged then sat at the table talking. We knew everything had changed. We were excited, discussing the possibilities.

CHAPTER 17 - HOME SWEET HOMESTEAD

As we finished the paperwork on the Villa. The title agent gave us some history of the property. The house was built by a couple from Hungary. They immigrated and moved to the area, to be near relatives. The property originally had a small wooden house. Over the years they raised a family and built the homestead. Their children sold it to a retired couple. They underestimated the physical work and decided to sell.

After the closing we met Al and Nancy at the Villa. We were all looking forward to a close inspection. Al and I wandered around outside, while the excited sisters went in.

Al was a salt of the earth guy. Out in front looking down the lane he said, "I wonder if they plow this in the winter."

"I was thinking about that when we first came out. I thought I would get a tractor with a blade. I could also use it for landscaping or pulling a trailer. I've always wanted a tractor for some reason. That never made much sense, because I lived in an apartment."

He chuckled, "You'll have to get up early to plow."

"I'm alright with that, it'll help the neighbors too. I think I'm going to get a four-wheel drive truck. That'll get me some respect at work."

He smiled, "If I hear about any good deals, I'll let you know."

Inside the barn I said, "We'll park the cars and store the equipment in here. Maybe I'll turn the loft into a shop."

He chuckled again, "It'll be cold out here in the winter."

We roamed the property, finding it had been well tended in the past. Some features were flower beds, the pond, an herb garden and a vegetable garden. There were many ornamental trees and shrubs. An orchard had eleven mature fruit trees, and there was a small vineyard.

Al nodded his approval, "I like it."

We joined our wives inside, they were in their own world. Furniture, curtains, rugs, the kitchen and dining room, so much to do and so little time. We shared our thoughts, then decided to go out to eat.

Over dinner Al said, "I was wondering if that was such a good idea. But now I see why you bought it. It reminds me of when I was in Europe."

Nancy was nodding her agreement. She said with a smile, "I love it! Is it okay if we move in with you?" We all laughed.

I said, "It's our hope that you do visit often. We're going to make the downstairs bedroom into the guest room. You could come out for dinner and stay the night. It would be a lot of fun, and you wouldn't have to drive home."

Al asked, "Have you got any plans for the cellar?"

I nodded, "Yes, we've got a rough idea. We were talking about it when we first looked it over. That basement has a lot of potential. We like the rustic look of the ceiling. We're going to panel the walls with rough pine from the sawmill. Then build another partition wall at the far end, to create a utility room. So the rest of the basement isn't cluttered. In there we'll have a kitchenette on one end, with a pass through counter into the main room. At the other end, we'll add another bathroom with a shower. That will leave a nice big space, we'll turn that into a rec room.

We're leaning toward an Irish pub theme. A bar with stools and a wet sink, darts and a full-sized pool table. Maybe a restaurant table, with some overstuffed chairs and couches. That's where we'll have a big television and a good hi-fi. How does all of that grab you?" Al and Nancy had big smiles.

Al wondered, "How would you get a pool table down there?"

"I helped my pool shark uncle do that. He took up some flooring, then dropped it between the joists with block and tackle. It took eight of us but it was worth it. There's nothing like a regulation table."

Al smiled, nodding his agreement. He was something of a pool shark himself.

Val said, "We've been talking about having a dinner party now and then. You have the first invitations to all of them. We'd like to be ready to host a dinner by the holidays."
Al offered, "If you ever need any help, just ask."
I smiled, "You can count on it. There will be some fun projects over the next few years."

Val and I dug in and set to it. We agreed she was project manager for the house. Two artists cannot paint the same painting. I did reserve a collaboration on the kitchen. Nancy had stopped working. So they scoured the planet together, looking for everything that makes a house a home.
We used one of the upstairs rooms as a bedroom. The other was multi-purpose, sewing, my drafting table and other crafts. The rooms were nineteen by thirty-eight feet, there was plenty of space for big projects. The partition wall provided closets for each room. It was simple and well designed, like the entire house. We sent happy thoughts to the builders on many occasions.

Using folding partitions, Val made a yoga den in the south end of our bedroom. The view was inspiring, I remembered my basement cave. A good place to practice is half the battle. My den was in the loft of the barn, we partitioned a small room from the shop. It included the big hay door and we added more windows. The door was nice, we sat with our feet dangling outside. It was twelve feet above the ground and the property sloped down from there. The view was wonderful, the sunrise, the pond and the woods behind the property. It was also a good place to smoke and stargaze. A space heater kept it cozy in winter, it was our secret hideout.
For the next few years, if I was not at the factory or sleeping. I was working on the Villa. We had a lot to get done before a holiday dinner. Nothing gets results like a deadline. Val and Nancy had the house looking great in no time. Rustic and elegant, we loved our beautiful home. Wondering daily at our good fortune to live there.

Around that time I met another wonderful lady. She became a big part of my life. We shared many happy and productive hours together. I loved her a lot and Val took that pretty well. She knew she had competition though. So my new girlfriend had to sleep in the barn.
On the way home from work I was following a tug. After a few turns I knew I was close. I spotted a Ford 8N tractor for sale, setup for clearing snow. The front blade was mounted, a dirt scoop was on the three-point hitch. "Hello there darlin'." She was beautiful and it was love at first sight. I named her Daisy.

The barn door was open, I approached calling, "Hello." A gentleman came to the door, waving me over. I went to ask about the tractor, "How's the transmission?"
"The tranny's perfect, but it has an electrical problem. I've got the new Farmall so it's just sitting around rusting." He gave me the details as we inspected the tractor. The tires we decent, there were no fluid leaks, the toolbox held a set of tire chains. The price was right because it was inoperative, we shook hands on it.
He brought her to our place as part of the deal. We did not have a truck and trailer yet. Into the barn she went for a complete makeover. New paint, an engine rebuild and all new electrical parts. When everything was done. I was looking forward to moving snow without a snow shovel.
That turned out to be easier and more fun than expected. Daisy had an engine block heater to help with cold starts. She sat just inside the barn door, ready to work. It was rare to plow in the morning, only with heavy snow overnight. Most times I plowed after supper. If it was not too deep, a few passes with the truck took care of it.
We had three neighbors on our lane, I plowed their driveways too. It only took a few extra minutes, that was time well spent building bridges. Sometimes they came out to thank me. It was a good chance to catch up on things. Val became close friends with the wives.
When I had to plow early, it was at four in the morning. Sometimes it was snowing so much I could barely see the road. Others it was clear and bitter cold, with the stars twinkling and the northern lights

blazing. I loved every minute, a thrilling arctic adventure right outside my door.

The rest of the year Daisy did landscaping and pulled a trailer. During the first few years we moved hundreds of tons of materials. Soil, gravel, boulders, sand, lumber, pipe, angle iron, cement, re-bar, firewood, muck, compost, railroad ties, ... Moving things around efficiently was always the name of the game. That pace slowed as we got the major work done. But we never stopped building and making improvements, it was fun and satisfying.

The rear mounted dirt scoop was priceless. We could back into a pile of material and take away several cubic feet. Then quickly dump it elsewhere. We did that thousands of times. The blade helped with landscaping, turning days of work into minutes. We got a post hole digger for the three-point hitch. Besides construction, it was good for planting shrubs and trees. Another implement was a real work saver, a robust steel bar that ripped a trench. As deep as two feet given several passes. It came in handy for long, underground utility runs. The last piece of the puzzle was a landscape rake. It got a lot of work done, fast.

Thinking of a fun way to celebrate Val's birthday. I remembered something I did with a childhood friend. His parents owned a large dairy farm. To celebrate his birthday they had a hayride. A hayride is an old-time tradition, a warm full moon night is best. First you have to wash your tractor, this is the prom for her. Then hook up the hay wagon, I made a removable deck for our utility trailer. Line the wagon with hay bales for seats and cover them with horse blankets. Have an informal dinner that finishes at dusk. Then everyone climbs onto the bales, bringing everything needed for a several hour party. Spend the night following scenic tracks through meadows and woods. Stopping in a nice spot is fine. Everyone loved it, we did it a few times every year. Daisy was in all her glory during those hayrides, she was never happier. All of those things and many others, forged a deep bond of affection with my mechanical sweetheart.

Al found me at work one day, to give me a lead on a used four-wheel drive truck. The owner was retiring and moving to Florida. It was at his house so I followed him home. The truck was a bruiser. He had it because he was in the volunteer fire department. It was lifted and setup for off-road, with over-sized wheels and tires. After a test drive we agreed on a price. I liked the bright yellow paint and the electric winch on the front. After dropping the truck off at the Villa. I returned him to his house with thanks and best wishes.

Val and Nancy drove up as I checked under the hood. Their eyes were big as they looked it over. I filled them in on the transaction. Suggesting she take Nancy for a spin, to see if they liked it. That was a serious error. I should have said, "It's very dangerous, so I'll drive when we need to use it."

Excited they climbed in, Val lumbered cautiously down the lane. Then turned and disappeared on the highway. When they came back, I could see she really liked it. Her look said, "Lead, follow or get out of the way." Nancy had the same grin. All they needed to complete the picture was well worn ball caps. I was wondering if I would ever get to drive it again.

Except for snow days, I took my car and left the truck. I knew her and Nancy liked showing off in it. They were having fun, reliving their teen years. The get me some respect at work plan, backfired. Whenever I drove my car I heard, "What's the matter, wouldn't Val let you drive her Power Wagon today?"

If you have not lived in snow country, it is common for cars to slide off the road. It was not unusual to help a dozen people during a winter storm. The winch was priceless for that. Many good deeds were done with that truck. I made all sorts of friends from all walks of life.

Shortly after the truck we got a flatbed trailer. We used it to help others fairly often, moving to a different house, retrieving cars, construction materials, firewood and things like that. Often Val came along because we were invited to dinner afterwards. It was always fun and rewarding, a lot more good deeds in the bank.

In addition to landscape maintenance, the Yazoo mower was the key to our organic horticulture. Val found her at a salvage warehouse. She was a beast and her bite was five feet wide. It was not for the faint hearted, the powerful engine was right between your legs. With only three wheels it was very maneuverable. That worked out well with our many landscaping features. It was an ingenious piece of equipment, I had great respect for the designer. The engine was missing and she needed a complete overhaul. So we bought her for a song. I got real satisfaction from restoring her. A new engine and she was good to go.

Having learned that humus is the key to organic horticulture. I built an accessory for the mower. A small enclosed trailer with a screened vent in the back. On the front was an engine driven turbine. It pulled the grass or leaves from the mower through a large hose. As the material passed through the impeller, it was chopped and blown into the trailer.

We layered those materials in a long row of wire bins. After a year, a four foot pile was only twelve inches of humus. But that layer was gardening magic. We collected vast amounts of chopped materials with relative ease. The whole process was challenging and somewhat of an art. I enjoyed every minute I spent, working with that marvelous piece of equipment.

CHAPTER 18 - A GIFT OF WISDOM

Right after we married, Val went skipping down the yoga trail. We had talks about breathing exercises and meditation. She progressed quickly, within a few months there was nothing I could tell her. She started telling me things. We practiced together now and then, it was fun after being alone for so long. But I thought it best to let her focus, she was stoked up. The old saying, "make hay while the sun shines".

Soon after she started, it was not unusual to get home and she was in the mood. It was not for supper. I think we were both making up for lost time. The book kept everything fun, our love sanctified the experiences.

Friends thought the yoga changes in Val were from moving to the Villa. The fresh air and rural lifestyle, which involves considerable work. She kept her cards close to her vest. Being reborn by the end of the year, vibrant, focused and poised.

Nancy knew about the yoga and watched with interest. Nobody knew Val like her. We were all talking over lunch. Nancy said, "You told me you found Val on purpose. That doesn't make sense, I'm missing something. How could you have loved each other, if you hadn't even met?"

I looked at Val, wondering if I should go there.

She looked down smiling.

I said to Nancy, "I'll tell you the answer, but you must take responsibility for your question. You're knocking on a door to a wider reality. Are you ready for what's on the other side?"

Nancy was thoughtful then smiled, "Okay I take responsibility, spill the beans." We all laughed.

I said, "The answer is simple. We already loved each other, because we've been together in countless lives. Over a span of time in the millions of years. You are Nancy this time, but this life is only one of many. Who you really are goes way beyond a single lifetime. So now you have your answer, are you glad you asked the question?"

"Yes."

"Do you have any more?"

She smiled, "Lots of them. I know what you're saying, I've heard of reincarnation. I've never really thought about it though." We all smiled.

I asked, "So what are your other questions, now that we pried the door open."

"You know things that most people don't, how did you learn them?"

"I got interested in metaphysics when I was young, and one thing has led to another."

"Then tell me something interesting, that most people don't know."

I laughed, "Okay, how about this. The secret to consciousness is the supreme power of the moment. The tiny spot in the infinite sweep of existence. Where we are focusing a beam of creative will. Carving a reality out of universal essence. Tell that to Al over dinner tonight, and see what he's got to say."

Nancy laughed, "I will, if I can remember it."

"Now let's quit fooling around, come on and give me a good question."

Nancy thought for a minute then asked, "Alright, how did you fix my hands? I've spent a lot of time at doctors, and it just made things worse. You work in a factory and you fixed them like it was nothing."

"That is a good question. I told you I knew about hands from playing the piano. Let me add to that, I've realigned wrists before. That's why it seemed like it was easy. I can assure you it was not easy, it was very serious and difficult. I just hid everything, because you had to be calm and relaxed. That's why I cried later. I can put everything off for a while, but the bill has to be paid sooner or later."

"Did the other people work in factories too?"

"If we're talking about wrists. Some from factories, a car wreck and several musicians. Wrist

problems are very common with musicians. Those awkward hand positions, all night every night. For a professional musician, a wrist problem can be devastating.

"Let me tell you how I started doing things like that, it was an accident literally. We were playing neighborhood hockey and I fell on my side. Then my arm was not properly aligned in my shoulder. A muscle had gotten twisted around. It hurt a lot and I couldn't move it properly.
I got out the anatomy book and really studied the pictures. While I was feeling my shoulder carefully with my fingers. I was isolating each muscle and trying to figure out what was wrong. I was tired so I decided to go to bed, then worry about it in the morning. Just as I was falling asleep, I started gently feeling my shoulder with my fingers. Something came over me, I became detached and very focused. I somehow stuck my finger in between the muscles. And moved the one that was twisted, back where it belonged. My arm was as good as new and the pain was gone.

"Since then there have been many others. Not just wrists, all kinds of things. But only in special circumstances like with you. Unless those requirements are met, it's off to the emergency room. This is not something I decide to do. I am being used to do it, the choice is not mine. That's the reason I asked you to keep it between us, it is sacred.
I've also studied quite a bit in anatomy and physiology books. Because of my interest in yoga, and to help people now and then. So I brought experience and knowledge to the party. There is one tricky part though, and I think that's what you're after. Because inside, you know you had an unusual psychic experience. When I looked in your eyes, I was able to feel your wrists. They knew exactly what needed to be done and they conveyed that to me.
After you sent Love to your hands that night, it arranged for them to be restored. Love sees things, from way beyond our tiny views of the universe. What seems impossible to us is nothing. I happened to be around with the knowledge and skills, so I got the call. If I wasn't in the picture, it would have happened some other way. You might have started doing yoga, that would have fixed them too."
Nancy smiled and nodded, Val gave me a wink.

After we took the astral trip to Asia, Val had a secret smile when I got home. We hugged and kissed, sitting on the couch she told me what happened. When she was meditating that morning, the gift of wisdom opened itself. She was immersed in a learning experience.
She said, "Now I know what you meant, when you said you can experience the message. It seemed like a few hours went by. But when I looked at the clock, it was only ten minutes."
"So what was in the message?"
She smiled, "What I experienced, was an overview of my life in Asia."
"I bet everything is there, if you want to look at the details. Now tell me something you saw."
"One thing that caught my eye, was that we never fell asleep. Even though our bodies rested, we remained aware. There was never a period of unconsciousness."
I offered my opinion, "I believe that has to do with the conscious use of our energy systems. Our minds were very disciplined too."

She smiled, "I'll tell you something you might like. Do you remember sitting outside the gates for a week?"
I nodded.
"From up on the roof, I watched you walk up the steps and sit down. I knew who you were and some of the plan. That after your parents died, you would probably come to the monastery. Of course nothing was certain. The day you did was the most important one of my life. I had a deep love as soon as I saw you. Have you remembered that day?"
"Yes, the more emotion the stronger the memory. My parents dying then, was the first thing I remembered from a past life. But I know what you mean about the love at first sight. The night we met, you looked in my eyes. Right then all of the veils fell away. I knew that you were my one true

love. That we would marry and spend the rest of our lives together.

"I'll tell you how I got started with past life memories. It leads into, how I ended up sitting on your doorstep. Here's the usual preamble. Our personal histories are stored in our permanent thought bodies. So if we can activate those senses, we can retrieve those memories. I knew that in theory, but I didn't have a way of applying it. I was candle gazing to improve my etheric vision."

Val had a questioning look.

I explained, "In a dark room with no drafts, use a nondescript background and a beeswax candle. Shut everything down and gaze at the candle without straining. Then go in as deep as you can.

I'd been doing that for a week. Then I decided to try some breath patterns at the same time. A half hour of that was plenty, so I stood up and stretched. There was a mirror on the wall and I glanced at it. There was no light except the candle on the floor. As I looked in my eyes, I saw something in my peripheral vision. It looked like my face had changed. So I took the mirror and set it on the floor. Behind the candle a few feet, leaning against the wall. So I could see it from the other side of the candle.

I gazed into my eyes in the mirror. Like I was doing with the candle, and with the same breath pattern. My face changed several times, but the person behind my eyes stayed the same. The faces were both men and women, different ages and races. It was amazing. I knew I had stumbled onto something important. I wondered if it might be, a way to access past life memories. Some kind of visual feedback loop, that lets you get past the memory blocks. After experimenting for a while. I realized how to do it without the mirror, while I was meditating.

"I was still in high school then. As it turned out, moving to the basement was a great idea. When all the bedclothes were soaked I could wash them. It was very quiet down there, no background conversations, television or radio noise. I could cry for a few hours straight without anyone noticing. It was also much quieter psychically, which was the most important thing.

I could slip out at night to go wandering in the woods. Because the basement stairs were in the garage. If I was doing yoga or something unusual. I would hear them above walking through the utility room. It gave me time to be doing something ordinary, before they came down the stairs. If I was sweaty, I'd grab the dumbbells and do curls. I did yoga and meditated every day for years. And no one in my family ever did know.

"I'd meditate in the early morning when everyone was asleep. So I wouldn't be disturbed. That morning I was irritated at my parents for some reason. I think that was related to recalling that particular memory. I'd been chewing away on the edges of the past life memory project. I decided to take a good bite." I shook my head and laughed, "'Fools rush in, where angels fear to tread.' It was positively awful, I was a little kid and both of my parents died. It took me several days to recover from that.

There was a silver lining though, I never got irritated at my parents again. In fact I savored every minute. By the last time I saw them, I had worked through our old business. But there was no way I could explain. I was on a spiritual journey that spanned other lifetimes and realities. We were a perfectly normal family, it was me who changed.

Family members are usually one of two things, old business or dear friends from other lives. The yin and the yang, the negative and the positive, the dynamics that stir the stew. You and Nancy are the second kind, there is a timeless affection. My family was more toward the first. But it's beneficial to resolve old business, so the participants agree to a family crucible. The goal is to work through the issues and hopefully become friends.

It's easy to get into conflicts down through the ages. It is very difficult to make things right. With very few exceptions, all of us have plenty of old business. It has to be dealt with sooner or later. It was avoidable and of our own making. Basically, you break it you fix it.

"After a couple of days, I started wondering what happened later. So I followed up on it and pieced together more of that life. It didn't take much effort, because the memories from that one are very strong. I was around seven when they died, after that my aunt and uncle took me in. They had a little place out in the country. They were very kind, and treated me like one of their own children. But inside, I really didn't care about anything. I went through the motions trying to fit in, but I was empty inside. I could have just walked off a cliff without hesitation. It was an awful feeling. But it was strangely liberating because of the detachment.

That went on for a while, until one day I was in the village. There were two monks shopping in a stall, an older one and a younger one. I had seen a few before but not very often. As I watched them, they both looked at me and smiled. I approached them respectfully, and asked if they would tell me about themselves. They took me to a bench to answer my questions. After that I thought about it for a few weeks. I was completely preoccupied in the matter. Then I woke up one morning with the firm decision, I wanted to be a monk. I told my aunt and uncle, and thanked them for taking care of me. That would be very strange here, but it wasn't back in that culture. My uncle offered to take me, but I told him I wanted to go alone.

"I journeyed to the temple with nothing but the clothes on my back. At least two hundred miles, it took several weeks. My aunt had given me food and water. But I met a family with some hungry kids, so I gave all of the food to them. I made the right decision, because that put me in a state of grace. I had a strong conviction that anything I needed, would be provided on the way.

Kind people did give me food and places to sleep. Those gestures had a deep effect. Even though they were almost starving. They shared what little they had with a stranger. Whenever I was thirsty I found water, and there were all the wild berries I wanted. I was living in a completely different world. I saw deep meaning in everyday life, things I had just taken for granted. The helpless babies and the elderly people, the families eating supper together. The birds singing in the trees. When I finally sat down in front of the temple. I made the firm decision, I would die before I gave up."

She smiled and we hugged.

I asked, "What's something else you saw?"

"There was an expedition high up in the mountains. We were hiking and rock climbing for weeks, then just sleeping on the ground. We were collecting rare plants, but it was also a test for me and some others. I was little and had a hard time keeping up. My hands and feet were covered with blisters, they really hurt. As much as I wanted to quit, I knew I had to continue. What kept me going, was the hope I might be chosen to advance."

"What else?"

"Do you remember the tunnels?"

"No, tell me about them."

"There were long tunnels that looked man-made, they went on for miles. We followed them for days and never found the end. There were big caves too, with all kinds of strange things. One looked like a spaceship."

"That's very interesting, maybe the Atlanteans made them. They had atomic technology and aerial vehicles too."

We talked more about those lives. They were significant because we intentionally raised our evolutionary force. That changes everything, building a bridge to the higher realms. Breaking down the barriers that keep us focused in the physical world. It also makes it easier in future lives.

We knew we had passed an important milestone. Val was an extraordinary person in that life. She was given a treasure chest of esoteric knowledge. We knew we could pick up where we left off, exploring the mysteries of the universe together.

CHAPTER 19 - THE FIRST HOLIDAY DINNER

We were invited to Corporate for the holiday party. That was my first time and a bit of a surprise. It was a coveted feather, even a few steps up the food chain. That happened because of the training seminar. Two adults sat in for a while, it was their call. I was receiving an award for the tech assists, which meant an invitation.

When I got home I asked, "Are you ready for a trip out West? It'll be a nice vacation on the Company's dime. They want to meet the woman I chose over that big promotion."

She smiled, "Of course I want to go, tell me about everything." We made plans over supper.

Flying to California with Val was fun after all the trips alone. That was her first time on a plane, I shared in her wonder. We had a suite in a nice hotel. After settling in we stood on the balcony. Enjoying the sprawling view of a bustling urban scene. We hugged and kissed, savoring the moment.

There was time for some shopping. We were looking forward to the big city, holiday atmosphere. After buying presents for Al and Nancy. We went our separate ways to shop for each other. I bought her a diamond necklace with earrings, perfume and lingerie. After salads at a sidewalk cafe, naps were in order to regroup for the night's gala.

Having brought several nice outfits, we donned our finery. Val looked like a model and I was presentable in good company. The amethyst pendant matched her dress perfectly.

The night started with a casual mingler, I introduced Val to everyone I knew. We got the nod, being an interesting addition to the stew. As we went to the dinner I whispered, "We just passed muster and now we're in the club. We'll be doing more of these things." She smiled, I gave her a squeeze.

The dinner was fun, we had a few live-wires at our table. Some people have a gift for humor and sociability. Speeches and awards followed the dinner, I was given one by the big boss. I gave Val a wink and a kiss when I sat. We moved to a ballroom for the party, a swing band played dance music. There were appetizers and plenty of liquid refreshments. Like all good parties, it took on a life of it's own.

I danced for the first time at our wedding reception. Realizing I needed work, I asked Val if she wanted to practice. She was a good dancer, I got better and we had fun on the way. That paid off at the party, we had a nice time dancing. I was happy Val was enjoying herself. The party was still going strong, as we wandered back to the suite.

The next day we had lunch with my farmer friends. They were coming to the city and I wanted to introduce Val. That was the last time I saw them. They were planning a move to Europe, where the politics were more open to cannabis. We laughed about the good times. As we said our goodbyes they gave me a present, an assortment of pedigreed cannabis seeds.

That night we ate at a Japanese restaurant. I lost track after nine courses, from drinking too much plum wine. Two musicians played traditional Japanese instruments, everything was perfect.

We enjoyed the festive atmosphere, window shopping on the way back to the hotel. Exchanging holiday greetings, trading smiles, listening to street music and enjoying the urban scene. We flew home in good spirits, planning our first dinner at the Villa.

I turned the barn loft into a workshop, after a few months it was well equipped. I was never bashful about buying tools for the Villa. I used the time and energy savings to get more things done. I considered it an industrial workplace, always weighing productivity and efficiency.

There was a secret project I wanted to finish before the holidays. A relief carved "Valerie's Villa" sign, with ornamental posts. When it was ready I showed her, "Merry Christmas, this is one of your presents."

She looked at it smiling and gave me a kiss. Then she looked at it again, smiling some more.

That sign got me interested in carving, it turned into a lifelong hobby. After appreciating one in a movie. I tried a totem pole, using symbols meaningful to us. After a few minutes with a mallet and chisel, I got the chainsaw. Roughing it out, then detailing with hand tools. It turned out well, I made several more for friends. There were also bears, birds and other animals. We kept a few, a seven foot bear was our mascot in the pub. Most we gave to friends who admired them.

When I tried working in stone, I found my medium. I loved carving stone, hours would slip by. The first piece was a water garden. We needed benches so I made one. Val liked it and it was functional. We went to a quarry, arranging for several loads of boulders. The ground shook as they tumbled out of the trucks. Most were used in landscaping, the best ones turned into outdoor art. Animals, benches, planters, water gardens, sundials, bird baths, wherever the muse led.

We had detailed shopping lists for the holiday dinner. That got easier when the pantry was properly stocked. The big night finally arrived and we had a little stage fright. Val was so casually beautiful, I was not thinking about cooking. As we waited for the guests I said, "Okay villa girl, now your dream has come true."
She hugged and kissed me, "Thank you very much. I know it was you that made all of this happen."
"No, I think we made it happen together. I would still be living in my little apartment, if it wasn't for you. You're the one that created all of this with your innocent childhood dreams. They are very powerful. You and Nancy turned this house into a gorgeous home. I've held up my end, I think it's about half and half pretty even. And that's how it should be, balanced."
She raised her eyebrows and smiled.

Except when it was socially advisable, I did not eat animal products. With the exception of yogurt, that was my decadent treat. Val asked, "What do you eat at your apartment?"
"Last night I had lentils, rice and green peas, with yogurt and strawberries for dessert."
"Do you eat meat?"
"Only with other people, I don't want them to feel uncomfortable. Social implications, let me give an example. If I had not eaten a burger at Nancy's, if I had only eaten a salad. It would have changed the atmosphere. The same at our reception, and I enjoyed every bite of everything. Because all of it was prepared with Love. That's far more important to me, than whether meat or vegetables are better.
It's the same at work functions. I can eat a salad for lunch and get away with it. Because I'm watching my waistline, they respect the discipline. If I did that at a seven-course dinner, it would create a ripple. I'm saying this from consistent experience.
Here's something else, I like burgers as much as anyone. That's what I grew up on. It's not like I'm doing something I detest. Then there's the ethical side, exploiting the animals. There's a bigger picture than that. Each one knew what would happen, when they signed on the dotted line. Their lifetime of willing service will be a milestone in their evolution. It will greatly consolidate their consciousness, they will make significant progress toward sentience. And that's their absolute number one goal. Which yields the cosmic irony, eating them is helping them."
She was thinking.
I pressed on, "What we eat is nothing, compared to how we feel about it. You made me an omelet one night, that was better for me than all the vegetables in the world. Don't change your diet because of unfounded worries. I love you and I love eating with you. It doesn't get any better than that. Follow you heart and find the balance, you'll be good to go."
She smiled and nodded.
"Since we're on the subject, let me tell you something interesting. I could survive on just about anything. The body rewiring kundalini brought, includes the ability to modify things internally. I could also live without eating anything. Assuming I lived an austere life, in a serene natural setting. I would be way out there if I did that. We're getting into monastery or remote hermit territory."
After Val started yoga, her food choices changed naturally. By the end of the year she was following

a vegetarian diet. In consideration of our guests, the dinners were standard fare. My part was to cook and help with service. The one place I needed work was hors d'oeuvres. There was plenty of time to practice. It worked out well, we ate them for dinner sitting on the couch. A tray of appetizers is always a crowd pleaser. We both had a penchant for decorative food.

With all changes to the house, we spared no effort complimenting the existing rooms. To create a functional partition. We divided the kitchen and dining space with a breakfast bar, cabinets above and below. The kitchen was well organized for workflow. There was a monthly restaurant supply auction in the city. We bought a commercial stove with a griddle between the burners. Also a commercial refrigerator, an upright freezer and a set of professional small appliances. We sprung for an ice maker to have plenty for dinners. Another was a commercial ice cream maker, which was very popular with our guests. We liked frozen yogurt with whatever fruit was ripe.

There was a sturdy shelf unit, to organize and display the cast iron cookware. We built a large island work center, with drawers and storage underneath. It was well lit and made a good prep station. The knives, utensils and cookware were top of the line. Val selected the beautiful silverware, dishes and glassware. It was a dream come true.

She found a massive table at an auction barn, with twelve matching chairs. The craftsmanship was excellent. It was so formidable no one else bid. The starting amount was low because they wanted it gone. She bought the perfect table for the Villa, at the price of firewood. When we went to pick it up. I could not lift an end off the floor, not even close. She said sweetly, "I wasn't worried, I knew you would find a way to get it home." I took three other men to help me flip it over. They told me a few other people had bought it. Then backed out when they came to pick it up. I loaded it on the trailer with a winch and padded rollers, Val was duly impressed. It took another trip for the chairs, they were also hefty.

After a stop in the barn for refinishing, we had to get it into the dining room. By then we knew how to remove the legs. More fun with rollers and it met with the boss's approval. All of the effort was worthwhile, from the presence it made in the dining room. I hugged and thanked her for finding it.

I cannot say I enjoyed working in a restaurant during college. But it all paid off in our new home. I built on that foundation, always trying to learn and improve. Cooking was a performance art to me, similar to music. It is all timing and techniques, and they are both universal languages. I found it to be enjoyable and rewarding, so did the guests. Something special happens when everyone wins.

There were twelve of us at the dinner. Al and Nancy who always got the first invitations, with some of my friends and some of Val's. There is something interesting about Love. When you give it away, it always comes back multiplied. Al and Nancy hosted our reception out of the goodness of their hearts. They were not wanting or expecting anything, they did it with pure Love. As things worked out, we invited them to countless dinners. The flower of their loving gesture bloomed and returned to shower them.

For libations we had wine, hard cider and mead. For those who partook the sacred herb, we made a casual trip to the barn. The house was cheerful with holiday decorations and a tall spruce tree. The fireplace crackled and perfumed the air. Holiday music was playing on the hi-fi. While Val plied the guests with appetizers in the great room. I filled the air with tantalizing aromas from the kitchen. I stuck with what I knew. The dinner went by the numbers, start to finish. Val was a born hostess and enjoyed it, we made a good team.

After dinner we moved to the great room for friendly conversation. As the fire dwindled I looked at Val to say, "Watch." Then slowly raised the vibrations in the room, until the air was sparkling. It was enchanting because of the holiday atmosphere. Our guests were silent in rapt wonder. Val was looking at me smiling, we were thinking the same thing. The purpose of those dinners should be to encourage spiritual experiences.

I reduced my sphere of influence, in a few minutes things were back to normal. I hoped they wrote it off later to the holiday cheer. As they said their goodbyes, Nancy gave me a funny look. I told Val later, "Uh oh, Nancy is on to us."
We made everyone take home the desserts, then closed the door for the last time. Val gave me a hug of happy satisfaction. Over time the word spread about our dinners. Any concerns about Val being lonely evaporated.

After the holidays, the Atlanta project was looming at work. A new factory is an ambitious project. I was invited to a three day conference with the design engineers. When I got the details I asked Val, "Any interest in a trip to Atlanta? I'll be busy during the day, so you'll have to fend for yourself. But we should be able to have some fun later." A midwinter trip to a warmer climate sounded good, we made our plans.
The work part of the trip was interesting, because of the planned innovations. For some reason I loved industrial automation. We stayed in the same hotel as the conference. It worked out well, saving the commutes. There was an indoor pool and other health amenities. Val enjoyed them after her yoga, then went exploring.

There was an informal dinner the first night, it was fun meeting new people. We sat with the new plant's maintenance superintendent and tech supervisor. I knew them both from California, we talked shop discussing the new factory. Val was all smiles getting a peek into my professional life.
By the second morning of the conference, I had reviewed the schematics and technical documents. Much of it was the same as our factory. I only had to work through the changes. The design engineers were independent contractors, the boss was a straight shooter. I waited for him to arrive the second morning, pulling him aside in the hall. As usual there were discrepancies in the schematics. One of the errors would have caused a boiler to explode, given the right circumstances. Three more were also dangerous. Others would have meant expensive and time consuming rework. I had documented the errors, making comments about solutions. I gave him the notebook and he thanked me.

After we finished for the day I went up to our room. Val gave me a hug, asking about my day. While we decided where to eat there was a knock. It was the head of the design firm and his wife, Joe and Helen. We shook hands, inviting them in. The introductions were made the night before. I found out Helen conducted a youth orchestra.
Joe said, "Thank you for those notes, may I ask you something?"
"Ask away."
"How did you find those problems overnight? You spent most of the evening at the dinner."
"I woke up early this morning and wanted something to do. I took everything downstairs to an empty conference hall. So I could spread it all out on tables. As to how I did it quickly, I have a photographic memory. They sent me here to help facilitate this project. So I wanted to go over the details.
I'm sorry I stopped you in the hall this morning. I thought you were the best person to oversee the corrections. And the sooner you were aware of the issues, the better. So you could be on top of it, if anything comes up in the conference. That would surprise me though, those problems were buried in a few layers of logic. This is all between you and me, and now the ball's in your court."

He listened with interest then said, "Thank you." His firm would have been responsible for the errors. The notes saved everyone concerned, time, money and trouble. It was my good deed that day, I knew it when I woke up. The elusive and satisfying, everyone wins.
Joe asked, "We were just going to a great Italian restaurant, would you care to join us? There will be some people from your company, if that makes any difference."
I asked, "Is it going to be business or social?" Then smiling at Helen, "Because I want to hear about the youth orchestra."

She laughed, "It will be social, I made him promise."
The restaurant was extra nice. Val and I were having fun hanging out with the grownups. Top brass from my company were there. They were wondering how I got an invitation to the big table. It was a good chance to build bridges, it never hurt to have friends in high places.
I asked Joe to outline his career. He was a self-made man who worked his way through college. His design work included a refinery, a steel mill and other daunting projects. Compared to him I was a shade tree mechanic. It is good to know your place in the universe now and then.

Helen also had her act together. I asked about the youth orchestra. She told us about her love affair with the violin. Early school years playing in youth orchestras. The selection process for Eastman School of Music. Where she met many of the great Classical musicians. She also played in the Pittsburgh Symphony for several years.
In addition to organizing and conducting the youth orchestra. She taught violin at her local college, while keeping a full schedule of private lessons. I wanted to hear more of her musical adventures.
The food was great. The four of us hit it off and became friends. We crossed paths again in Atlanta and elsewhere. They stayed at the Villa a few times. Helen was also an excellent pianist. We stayed up half the night playing flute and piano duets. She gave me some tips that really helped my piano technique.

The next morning was the last day of the conference. Joe and I were chatting about good places to eat in Atlanta. The bosses were watching from down the hall. They thought he was headhunting, wondering if I would accept the offer. The reason that is important, they rewrote my job description a short time later. So I qualified for incentive pay, even though I was white collar. That meant a monthly bonus for holding several professional licenses. In short, I got a nice raise.
All of that from a few hours of fun, waiting for the world to wake up. Because of my professional skills, that was my version of a crossword puzzle. I enjoyed the conceptual thinking involved in design.

We had arranged to stay through the weekend. The first day we went shopping, spending the morning at a large music store. I played a Steinway grand piano, it was gorgeous. We went there to look at flutes, some have holes in their keys. They permit bending notes and open up fingering options. They are essential for jazz so I wanted to step up.
I asked if they had any on consignment. One was a Powell in excellent condition. The action was effortless and the tone was velvet. It played itself, I just had to hold it. What I loved, the intonation was perfect. Every note was exact all the way up the scale. It was a masterpiece.
I gave Val some "Tico Tico", it was worth a smile. A young man was trying out a sax. He gave me an intro, we got something good going. He asked if I wanted to sit in that night. But they did not start until midnight, we had plans for the next day.
The Powell originally sold for more than a new car. They wanted half of that, still more than I planned to spend. It did not take much arm twisting from Val. The flute and I became close friends. I named her Shakti, after the Hindu Queen of Light. Always going with me on trips, she had a talent for finding pickup gigs. Churches, clubs, cafes, art shows, nursing homes, she was not particular.

I thought about balance, so we spent the afternoon clothes shopping. Val found some nice things, I could not wait to see her wear them. We found sapphire earrings made for one of the dresses.
All of that shopping made us hungry, we had dinner at a Cantonese restaurant. I had eaten Asian food many times, but never prepared any. A bell went off that night. I started exploring Asian cuisine in the kitchen, featuring it in dinners now and then. We ate a great deal over the years. It adapts readily to a vegetarian diet.
The next day we went to the Atlanta Zoo. Making several new friends, and having more fun than the law allows. We flew home that night happy and satisfied. She slept while I watched the sunset. As

much as we enjoyed the break from winter. Unlocking the door of the Villa was even nicer.

CHAPTER 20 - THE LIBRARY

When we could, we went on astral adventures together. In the beginning we stayed on Earth, visiting natural places like Victoria Falls. So she could get comfortable with her astral senses. That was fun but our curiosity kept us exploring. We started visiting the astral, an endless wonderland. I knew some interesting things and showed her. We lost each other a few times, it was usually my fault. I was always trying something new, sometimes it did not work as planned.

As entertaining as that was, it was not fulfilling. We wanted to learn or be of service. After ongoing discussions we had an idea. To leave our astral bodies behind and roam in our thought bodies. So we could explore the third floor. I had been there a few times but did not have a reliable technique. Every visit was a transcendent growth experience.

Relaxing on the couch I asked, "Do you want to get serious about this idea? If we could learn to use our thought bodies. It would be well worth a lifetime's effort. All of the doors swing open. Any information we want and who knows what kind of surprises. The bottom of the third floor, makes the top of the astral look like a carnival." Val smiled and we discussed it further.

I thought of something, "Isn't this the most wonderful thing. Here we are together again, investigating the mysteries of the universe." We looked in each other's eyes, then kissed and hugged. We ended with, "Let's think of anything that might be helpful. Then we'll dedicate some time next Sunday morning."

We hiked in the State Forest behind the Villa, always taking water and snacks in my backpack. Our hiking clothes and boots were good quality. The next Sunday morning we started off to a pond, at a good pace to get our blood flowing. There was a nice sitting log, we brought pads to make it comfortable.

I asked, "Alright, what did you think of?"

"You first."

"I've got two things. The first is that the thought world is selfless. We'll need to control our emotions, even the good ones. They must be subordinate to thought. The second one is this. You know how you can accept the strangest things in the astral? It's because logic goes to the thought world. I have an idea, but I haven't ironed out all of the wrinkles. What I was wondering, if we could force ourselves to think logically. It might kick us into our thought bodies. Try to do some algebra or something like that."

Val smiled and nodded, "That sounds interesting, it would be a good subject for meditation. Here's what I came up with, let's go see our friend in Asia."

I thought about her idea, "He did say we're always welcome, I'm sure he meant that. I think that's a great idea. I usually wouldn't bother someone, if I can figure it out on my own. This is a little different, his advice would be priceless. Do you have any other ideas?"

"You know how we were talking about a spring tune-up? That would be a step in the right direction."

"Yes, that's another great idea. It's all about raising our vibrations, and that's a real good start. It would also be a gesture of respect. It's good etiquette and would reflect our sincere commitment."

We worked out a plan. Knowing our physical bodies affected all of them I suggested, "How about something like this? A five day fast to start, followed by two days of fresh juice. Then go into training for six weeks. A super clean diet with plenty of salads and fruit. No sex, weed or alcohol, and extra time every day on energy work. As much hiking as possible, and there's plenty of hard work on the Villa."

Val was all in, but she gave me the sad eyes over the sex part. I agreed but said, "Just think how much fun the victory party will be." We slept in separate beds for the duration.

We went into training for an esoteric prizefight. I had pursued many schemes by myself. It was much more fun working with my one true love. By the end of the six weeks we were frisky kittens. Deciding to visit our friend and seek his guidance. In the most kind and thoughtful manner, he gave us things to practice. Encouraging us to return after we had done so.

The techniques were along the lines of my idea. Shut down the desire and turn on the mind. We were ahead of the game. We had been meditating on logic, to make it easier to evoke in the astral. In a few weeks we returned, he was waiting. After giving us tips and guidance, he took us to the thought world at the very bottom. Having us carefully observe everything and absorb the atmosphere. So we had a fixed destination to focus on. He took us back to his chambers. It was our turn to drive and he would follow.

Holding hands we did something difficult in the astral, we became analytical. Throttling down the emotions, arranging them like useful tools. Then deliberately raising our vibrations. Not gradually, like shifting gears and stepping on the gas.

We returned to the target spot and knew why he picked it. Back to his chambers, then we went without him. After marveling at our surroundings, we returned and gave him our heartfelt thanks.

I asked, "Where were the people?"

"They were there, I hid them so you could focus." We all beamed at each other.

I had another question, "What happened to our temple?"

"It was destroyed, we moved underground. Temples are being rebuilt, we will begin soon."

We found out how to make a donation and he blessed us. After thanking him again we returned to our bed.

We gained skill visiting the lower level of the third floor. Although it has an upper threshold, it seems infinite. Entire mind expanding worlds in every direction. We explored together and separately.

The spot where we were taken is an area for new arrivals. It will be whatever the person was expecting. Pleasant surroundings based on nobler thoughts. For us, we were on a bench in a beautiful park.

We wanted to go together the first time. With no trouble we found the bench in the reception area. This time we could see people, two came by strolling down the path. They wore beautiful glowing gowns with shifting pastel colors. Val and I were in hiking clothes. They both smiled and sent us Love. As they moved away, I realized their gowns were their thought body auras.

We had set a goal. I was sure we had another home upstairs, because I had a glimpse. We wanted to see it. Our first challenge was to get around locally. The surroundings were entrancing. We were soaking it all in, making it as familiar as the breakfast table. That is all we planned for that shakedown cruise.

We were watching the others, the newcomers were easy to spot. We all wore Earth clothes in various styles. As we enjoyed the scene a young man greeted us cheerfully, "Did you just get here?"

I smiled back, "Yes, but we are just visiting."

"That is new to me, I did not know that could be done."

"We learned to explore the astral, then a friend helped us get here. I believe we have a home in this world, we are trying to find it."

After looking at each of us carefully. He smiled and said, "Just now, you were wondering how to get around. Let me show you that, then we will find your home."

We smiled at him, nodding yes.

Instantly, he was fifty feet away. After a moment, back in front of us. Suggesting, "Now you try it," while sending us information.

Holding hands, we willed ourselves down the path. Our friend was standing beside us. He smiled, "That was very good. What we are doing is one of my jobs, helping newcomers get started. That usually takes longer."

I offered, "Maybe it is because we meditate."

"That practice will be of great benefit, when you come here for good. Most new arrivals must spend time, learning to control their thoughts."

After we practiced a few more times. He showed us other fun ways to get around. Satisfied with our progress he asked, "Would you like to find your home now?"
Val and I smiled at each other, then nodded.
There was a sensation of movement. We were sitting on another bench, way up on a lookout point with a sweeping view. Our friend was no longer young. He was middle-aged with a kind and serene face. Pointing to an estate in distant hills he said, "That is your home."
Our surroundings were different, the atmosphere was much brighter. Everything had a beautiful sparkling, fairy tale look. I admired the bench, it was artfully carved from rose quartz. Touching the arm gave me the impression I made it.
The path was pebbled with semiprecious stones, there were precious stones here and there. I asked, "Where are we in the world of thoughts? This appears to be higher than the welcoming area."
"We are above the great divide. Where thoughts that were accomplished come to fruition." With a smile he said, "You are on the permanent level."
Val and I looked at each other with smiles of wonder.
He continued, "You did make this bench, and brought it here as a civic gesture. That will help you return in the future."
He seemed familiar I asked, "Do we know you from somewhere?"
He beamed at us, "Yes, you helped me a long time ago. That is why I was drawn to you today. If you ever need anything, think of me." With a heartfelt smile he walked away, evaporating into a golden mist.
We looked carefully at our home and surroundings, so we could return to the spot. We saw other estates scattered in distant hills. Some were glittering castles, they gave me the fairy tale impression. A large body of water was in the distance, a city surrounded a cove. Starting in the hills and spreading down to the shore. The buildings sparkled in a rainbow of colors. There were many other things we wondered about. My body gave me a tug, we took one last look. After a feeling of motion we were back in our bed. We hugged and were soon asleep.

When I got home one afternoon, we went for a winter hike in the forest. That was always fun seeing animal tracks in the snow. Sometimes they led to a den or a creek. There is something otherworldly in the winter woods at dusk. The edge between the worlds blurs, it almost feels astral. Especially if it is very cold and snowing.
After showers and dinner, we had a smoke and poured some mead. Then settled on the couch with the fireplace blazing. I had the next day off, we planned to make a fun night of it.
Val asked, "What else have you seen in the thought world?"
"A library and I went to my grandfather's reunion. I also saw parts of some concerts and lectures. I went there directly a few times and a few from the astral."
"What were the lectures about?"
"I said lectures for want of a better word. They were much more than just talks, let me give a pale description. As usual when I went to bed one night, I was pondering the mysteries of the universe. I ended up in a large round auditorium. It had tiers of seating, surrounding a big stage in the center.
I knew immediately I was in the thought world. You know how everything looks different, more intense and vibrant. It's like everything is more alive.

"The auditorium was filled and everyone was perfectly still. They were all looking at the stage with anticipation, like they knew what was coming. A large brilliant star appeared in the center, I'm not sure where they were from. They started sparkling in rainbow colors, then assumed a godlike human form. Sometimes they seemed male and sometimes female, they were all of both and more.
Their presentation wasn't them speaking, the whole audience shared an intense learning experience.

That was caused by the speaker's radiations, it was breathtaking and glorious. The topic was, who humans are, where we came from and where we're going. I had to leave before it was over, but what I saw was astounding. Saying there are lectures in the thought world is a big understatement. A life changing odyssey would be a better description. Everything I've seen there is like that. Whatever you were expecting in your wildest dreams. Falls miserably short of what you find."
Val smiled, "Maybe we can go to one of those together. Now tell me about the library."

I collected my thoughts, "When I first moved to the basement. The astral and physical worlds were all mixed together. My approach to kundalini awakening, was like fixing a watch with a hammer. For several months it was a roller coaster. Hold on tight and catch your breath before the next hill. But every day got better, I was learning a whole new way of living. After a while I mostly spent my days in this world, and my nights in the astral.
On a Saturday afternoon during high school, I was in the downtown library for several hours. It was big, the reference section was more than the whole school library. I went there whenever I could, all of the librarians knew me. One of them saw me reading by flipping the pages. She knew what was going on, and gave me an interesting smile when I checked out. I expected her to tell the others but she never did. I was always courteous to them and respectful to the books. I usually checked out the most I could. My mom would drop me off, then her and my sisters went shopping. After that we'd all go out to eat together, it worked out well for everyone.

"So that night when I went to bed, I had libraries on the brain. When my body fell asleep, I thought it might be fun to see one in the astral. I pictured a huge beautiful library, with endless aisles of books. After a feeling of motion I was in one. I was staring at all of the books and the beautiful library. I went to a shelf, as I reached for a book it talked to me. Telling me about it's contents. As I moved my hand down the shelf, each one did. That might sound obnoxious but it wasn't, it was marvelous.
I looked up and a man was approaching. He was so bright I could hardly look in his direction. He was very kind and asked if he could help me.
I told him, 'I love libraries, so I wanted to visit one in the astral world.'
He smiled and looked at me intently, 'I know a book you will enjoy.'
I followed him to an aisle and he picked out a book. Then he put it on a table in an alcove, I knew he wanted me to read it. He told me, 'This is not the world of emotions. You are in the world beyond, where thoughts manifest.'
I thanked him and he went about his business. I reached for the book and knew what it was about. It was an overview of the thought world. I opened it and was drawn into the book. As I turned the pages, I experienced the contents.

"There was a picture of a tranquil building, surrounded by manicured grounds. Then I was actually standing in front of the building. I walked up the steps and through the open entrance. It reminded me of a nursing home. The residents were sleeping peacefully on couches. There were well designed rooms that gave privacy to each person. But there were no doors and there was no medical equipment. A few caregivers were watching over the residents. One of them came over to talk with me. I asked her, 'Would you please tell me about this place?'
She did, it was a rest home. In some cases when a person leaves for good, their thought bodies fall asleep. Especially if they're in the lower astral. But sometimes it even happens, when they go straight to the thought world.
The helpers monitor each resident. So they know when the person is about to wake up. Then a friend or relative is called, their familiar face is very helpful at that point. They take the person under their wing. Then gently help them get started with their wonderful new life. In a world where all of their dreams have come true.

"I closed the book and was back sitting in the chair. I knew that was the mother lode, so I turned the

pages until I got a tug. It was time to get home to the basement. I was back in my body, I had to go to the bathroom. I was laughing to myself. Anything I wanted to know was at my fingertips, and I had to leave for that."
Val's answer to that was, "Wow, tell me some more about the book."
"Another page showed a large outdoor amphitheater, filled with people. There were rainbow patterns of light in the sky above. That provoked my interest so I dove in.
I was sitting in the audience in the top row. It was a concert with an ensemble on stage, the music was incredible. As they played, it created patterns of light in the sky above. Using every color in the rainbow and more that are not. The beautiful patterns were somehow appropriate to each musical passage. It was very enchanting. I believe that hidden memories of those, is behind the universal fascination with fireworks."
"Keep going."

"When I started with that book I opened to a random page. I decided to see if there was a table of contents. There was and one thing stood out. The book sensed my interest and turned to that page. It was a lifelike graphic, showing Earth and her seven bodies.
You could zoom in or out, or change your viewpoint. Earth's etheric form included the atmosphere. Her astral body went way out into space, about halfway to the moon. When we are in our astral bodies, that's the size of our native residence. Although we can venture much further, if we have the skills and fortitude.
What's interesting, all of the bodies occupy the same space where they overlap. Each world is so much more refined than the previous, they can all intermingle. That's why we can sit in the park, switching to the astral and back.

"Earth's thought body was highlighted so I zoomed in. There were different layers shown with descriptions. To give an impression of what it was like in that region. The general idea was, practical thoughts toward the bottom. The more abstract ones like philosophy, toward the top.
Another page explained multiple copies. The thought world has five dimensions, as far as understanding that I don't have a clue. But one thing gets added to the equation, things can be in several places at once. Let's say that two sister's dearly loved a childhood pet. Both can have it in their separate lives.
I think that's how we used to send copies of ourselves. That's something else we should dig into, maybe we can remember how. That would be a handy little trick.

"I got back to that library four other times, and I was given a book each time. They were always related to something I was digging into right then. After the first visit I didn't waste any time, I devoured the books as fast as I could. Let me tell you what they were, then you can decide which one you want to hear about. One was about the Capital Planet of the Milky Way. It's at the center of the galaxy and is extremely advanced. Another was about the history and future of Earth. Another was about the history and future of humans, during this cycle on Earth. The last book was about celestial chemistry. The seven states of matter in each of the seven realms. Do you want to hear about any of those, or just relax?"
Her eyes were wide, "I want to hear about all of them. Tell me about the history of Earth."
"Do you want the future part? It was kind of unsettling for me, so I'm giving you fair warning."
She nodded.

I began, "Let me say something before I start. I'm always saying advanced beings, let me elaborate on that. Humans are by no means at the top of the scale of evolution. More like close to the bottom. There's intelligence and organization behind all of this. From beings who are to us, what we are to plants. And even further than that. They work in time frames in the billions of years. They are aware of all of the humans on Earth, including the ones upstairs. Which is a much larger number than us

down here. They can do that, just like we could be aware of the plants in our garden.
But before you get to feeling all microbial. Be assured we will ascend to those heights and beyond. My intention is to savor every step on the way. The whole point is the gathering of those experiences. Each life is a single thread, in a magnificent tapestry that will never be finished.

"For the history of Earth, the book started with the formation of our solar system. We use the universal forces to create in a very basic way. Compare that to how the Sun works with them. And the end we see is highly attenuated. Advanced beings use the same forces on a much larger scale. To get an idea of their abilities. They live comfortably in a nine dimensional reality. The extent of their creative authority overshadows us, like a mountain to an ant.
A being from a few rungs up the ladder, came to this area of the galaxy. Using energetic techniques they established an immense whirlpool. To gather certain particles that are well dispersed in space. I'm saying particles for lack of a better word. They aren't actually physical particles, potentials would be more accurate. Those proto-particles are very special. They contain the potential for all states of matter, including every possible molecular combination.
The whirlpool drew the potentials together to form a giant disc. It was even bigger than our solar system. That process went on for a very long time, as more particles were collected. Certain elements were drawn to the center and started compressing into a ball. The rest of the disk was divided into rings, where they wanted the planets to form. Then smaller whirlpools were created in each ring. As they orbited the central whirlpool, they collected the material in their ring. Eventually there was a solar system, with the Sun and orbiting planets.

"Here's something interesting. When that was done, the planet formed here was not Earth. It was a different one, we evolved through our animal phase there. When everyone finished the course. We were all living in a special place, way upstairs. We spent the better part of an eternity working through the animal kingdom. In order to develop our emotions, which built our astral bodies.
Let me say something about that. Emotions and our experiences in the astral are vitally important. Just like the background of a painting is as important as the subject. Emotions are the basis of art, beauty and everything that makes life worth living. Imagine a world without desire and emotion, it would be like an insect colony.
Now I'm finally getting to Earth. They started another whirlpool near our previous home. It encompassed that planet and pulled most of it into the whirlpool. What was left was the cherry pit we call the Moon. Even things from the core were extracted, some of the craters were caused by that. That whirlpool also attracted more material from space. The new compressed ball was the planet Earth being born.
So technically we still live on the Moon, because most of Earth is made from physical Moon materials. It's a long involved process, to create all of that physical matter from universal essence. So they reuse whatever they can, just like we reuse valuable topsoil or gravel.

"That's the physical side of things. We always move to a different planet to start another kingdom. But we charged the Moon's astral body, with a fantastic amount of emotional energy. That is the secret behind the compelling allure of the Moon. Various refined energies like that are the coins of the realm. It's hard won over billions of years and is extremely valuable. Nature doesn't waste anything, it has been streaming to Earth ever since. We made it, and for better or worse it's ours. When it's all finally here, the Moon will disintegrate. That energy is the last thing holding it together.
Let's get back to Earth and fast forward a few years. There's nothing to see, except boiling rock that slowly cools into a planet. Eventually the surface formed a crust. Water was finally introduced from impacts by small celestial objects. They were giant ice balls from further out in the solar system. At one point water covered the entire planet, there was no land whatsoever. Liquid water is Earth's treasure, many things have to stay in balance.
One big piece of land rose from the boiling seas. Our most violent storms are like spring zephyrs

compared to then. Volcanoes were everywhere and the seismic activity was incredible. Thunder was loud enough to split rock, and all of it went on nonstop. There was plenty of carbon dioxide, so chlorophyll was introduced to make oxygen. A long time later there was a primitive atmosphere. Things finally settled down enough to seed primitive lifeforms. Natural disasters decimated them on a regular basis.

"All of this is being overseen carefully by advanced beings. If I say coordinators, that's who I'm talking about. The coordinators have various physical vehicles. Their lower ranking staff use them to conduct their business. They've been spotted throughout history, although they try to be discrete. There is a hierarchy of participants in their effort. Some are scientists specializing in biology, botany, geology and other disciplines. In the future, many of our scientists will fill those ranks on other new planets. That must be quite an adventure, populating a barren world with life.

"The big continent broke into smaller pieces. Over great spans of time new areas formed, while others were broken apart or submerged. For example, there was a continent in the region of the Indian Ocean. We all spent our primitive days there, only a few places are still above water. There was another one in the Atlantic, it broke apart and submerged. That brings us to the present, with the good old North American continent.

The weather time-lapse was interesting, the cyclical ice ages and warming. The coordinators know what they're doing. We've got our version of gardening, and they have theirs. They're tilling their garden for a new season.

The amazing fertility of the Midwest is the result of their deliberate efforts. America has plenty of ore and petroleum, and the climate spans the sweet spot. None of that is random. They skillfully prepared a fertile garden for the United States to flourish.

"There were a few things that caught my interest. One was that Earth's axis has been changed several times. There's no way to describe the global impact of those events. The climate changes and the seismic activity, then the polar ice melting. That's all just further development of their planetary garden.

Here's another thing that stood out. One of those pole shifts happened, when another celestial body nearly collided with Earth. That was done deliberately for two reasons. The first was to adjust Earth's orbit slightly, that also caused the axis of rotation to shift.

The second reason, they wanted us to have a source of portable power. So we could have an industrial age, with all the fun that brings. The portable power source was crude oil. The other planet had oceans of it and Earth got soaked.

"That reminded me of a discussion with a high school science teacher. He was telling the class how petroleum came from melting dinosaurs. I knew that wasn't true for two reasons. The natural world would have digested the animals, between other animals all the way down to microbes. Some will freeze in permafrost and fall in tar pits. But nature was no different then. Those valuable nutrients would have been devoured by the system.

The other reason is the quantity and global distribution. There are billion gallon deposits all over the world, even under the oceans. The math isn't there. The science teacher wasn't amused with my rationale. That's the day I realized, our science is at best shifting sands. If you want to know the real truth about anything. You had better get a shovel and start digging. Because the dog and pony show meant to keep us rabble quiet, is mostly smoke and mirrors.

Where scientists are making a critical mistake. They think if they go to the far end of materialism, they will discover the truth. But they have to consider the spiritual as well as the manifest, they're inseparable. Our scientists must also be mystics, and our mystics must be scientists.

"I saw that clearly when I met some beings from another galaxy. I was exploring the physical world in

my astral body, and I saw a spacecraft parked under the ocean. I had seen them before and they always felt inhospitable. But this one was different, there was a welcoming curiosity. So I communed with one of the occupants.
That's when I learned about hyper-etheric propulsion. Their craft was round and had a circular tube inside the rim. The hyper-ether flows around inside it at extremely high speed. They can use that to alter the effects of gravity. They were very advanced, scientist-explorer types. But they were also spiritually advanced."
"What did they look like?"
"He looked like a human, wearing a close fitting uniform. His face reminded me of what someone might look like, if otters eventually became people. They travel all over studying other civilizations. Their home planet is in another galaxy. He was courteous and forthright, very sharp and capable.
He wanted to discuss our society, so I was giving him an overview of life in America. He asked about education and I explained schools and colleges. He couldn't believe the cost of a college education. The thing that determines the future of a society. He was dumbfounded, and there was a feeling of pity for our immaturity. I felt like a savage from a lost tribe in Borneo. He also told me their measure of a civilization, is how those on the lowest levels are treated. Are they empowered or exploited?

"Let's get back to Earth's history. That planetary rendezvous, is a good example of the planning by the coordinators. The industrial age and current population explosion, would not have happened without that event. And it had to be done before lifeforms were established. Our modern society was built with crude oil. Planes, ships, factories, cars, heavy equipment, furnaces and my personal favorites, chainsaws and outboards.
The book kept going about what's planned for the future. This is your last chance to bail out."
She shook her head.
"As usual, first some background information. When organic matter decomposes, it creates methane. If the region is cold enough, it gets trapped in ice and freezes into methane clathrate. That's an ice cube that will actually burn like a candle. There are vast deposits under the polar oceans. In addition to that. An incredible amount of organic matter is frozen in layers miles thick. If it melts it will become a stewing swamp, producing even more methane. The amounts possible dwarf the human emissions.
Here's why that's important. As a gas, methane stores a considerable amount of heat. In the atmosphere it acts like an insulating blanket.

"At one point in Earth's history, numerous arctic volcanoes erupted at the same time. That caused a great deal of methane to rise into the atmosphere. Earth's temperature shot up in a blink of an eye, on a geologic time scale. That episode greatly reduced the amount of ice on Earth.
Back to the probable future. The industrial age has raised Earth's overall temperature. We're pumping tremendous amounts of exotic gases, into a very fragile atmosphere. Eventually we will raise the Earth's temperature far enough. That the frozen methane and permafrost will begin to melt. When enough melts, the process will become self-sustaining. It will run away on it's own. All people will be able to do is scramble to adapt. Just like we've been doing for millions of years.
Temperature rise eventually equates to sea level rise. They'll have to print new maps, because the coastlines will change over time. A significant number of people will be displaced because of that. Miami, New York City, San Francisco, New Orleans, you get the picture.

"But that isn't the thing to worry about, because it will happen gradually. People will realize they need to move to higher ground. The ominous and devastating threat, is a sudden seismic event. In time, a western part of California will become an island. The Mississippi River will become an inland sea. Flowing north then draining into the Atlantic, through the much larger Great Lakes. Those will result from seismic activity, that will redraw the map of the United States.
If that's not enough excitement, a new continent is rising from the floor of the Pacific. That will cause ongoing seismic activity, encompassing that region. All of that is just the United States, now think

about the rest of the world. Again it will affect a significant number of people.
One more to consider, Earth's axis will be changed fairly soon. Some areas that are densely populated now, will end up in polar regions. And some colder areas like Canada, will become temperate and prosperous. Thriving until they become the great world powers. While those that are currently dominant will fade to the background. Many an empire has come and gone, just since the days of Atlantis.
In the not too distant future on a geologic time scale. There will be a new continent where the Pacific Ocean is now. And the United States will be thoroughly fractured.

"As I said when I started, none of this is some random act of nature. There's a plan for us and a plan for our dear hostess Earth. The challenges will prompt humanity to further develop intelligence. And hopefully to work together, to overcome the adversity. All of our progress to this point, is built on a towering peak of adversity.
Those struggles will also lead to significant spiritual growth. Which is on the front burner for us right now. Dramatic spiritual growth requires considerable turbulence. Like bringing a pot to a rolling boil.
People who aren't seeking those experiences, will not incarnate during that period. Gradually the physical population will be greatly reduced. Through the natural attrition of our comparatively short lifespans.

"As for Earth, the more of her water as liquid the better. Especially when it's well distributed across land, forming rivers, lakes, creeks and puddles. Because the divine liquid crystal we call water, means life in all of it's diversity. Assuming the climate is amenable. Think of the Amazon River and that lush corridor. Then imagine a great deal of Earth, that lush and teeming with life.
At some point all of the human creations will be gone. The axis will be shifted and stabilized. Ecological balance will be restored, and the flora and fauna will be repopulated. Earth will become a pristine jewel, complete with a halo of sparkling rings. She will be so beautiful, rare and precious. Earth will be an intergalactic tourist destination. Visitors will pass by millions of planets just to see Her."

Val smiled, "Thank you for telling me that, it's amazing. I can see what you mean about unsettling. While we're on the subject. Can you tell me how to commune with Earth?"
"The secret to communing with another being, is in shifting your view toward theirs. More advanced beings will meet you halfway. With others nothing is required, they are already in tune with your thoughts and feelings. Because the connections between their bodies are active. Here's how I shift my perspective toward Earth's. Earth makes an orbit around the sun in a year, thanks to a delicate balance of forces. Right now Earth is rocketing through space on a racetrack, at sixty-seven thousand miles an hour. She is also spinning on her axis, one revolution every day. That surface speed is over a thousand miles an hour. That is Her perspective.
That's one piece of the puzzle, here's another. There are spots that make it easier to connect with Earth, because of intersecting lines of force. They are all over, if you pay attention you will notice them. Wildlife will point them out sometimes. Those spots are best but anywhere will work. It's more about you feeling centered.
Start off slow with this technique, tiny baby steps. And practice, you will get better. Sit in meditation facing directly east, and still your mind. Now picture you location on Earth. As if She was a spinning globe and you are a fly. As you go in deeper let go of your spatial reference, become the fly one the globe. Now you're traveling east at a thousand miles an hour, as the planet spins. Feel that, but if you start to get even slightly dizzy. Stop immediately and forget that idea for a while. It might not ever be a good match.
If you don't get dizzy, keep working with that. When it feels pretty comfortable. Add the second movement, Earth's orbit around the sun.
That's how I make contact. But Her consciousness is much bigger than ours. So you have to expand

as far as you can and then some. If you do try to make contact, tell me what happens."
She smiled, " Let's stretch, then tell me about another book."

CHAPTER 21 - HUMAN BEANS

After a break I said, "Okay, one more. Name your poison, Capital Planet, celestial chemistry or human beans."
She smiled, "Spill the beans."
"Here's the usual introduction, what we're talking about are physical vehicles. A succession of gradually improving bodies. We jump into them and drive them around, until they can no longer be sustained. As they get more complex, they become more difficult to use. The increased challenge leads to increased growth. Just like starting in kindergarten and stepping up each grade from there. The spirit will choose a version and cultural situation, most suited to their life goals. Like someone chooses a car or truck matching their tastes and requirements.
As usual the course has seven steps. The steps are the basic types of vehicles available, and the configuration of the continents. Because the steps are always separated by geological events that redraw the globe. Ocean floors become mountain tops and mountains are below the waves. There are oceanic shells ten thousand feet up in the Himalayas. For an idea of the extent of the remodeling. The stupendous rotational forces of Earth and Her flexible crust, all come into play during a pole shift. They alterations typically don't work out too well, for the previous civilization.
There is also an improving succession of bodies within each step. Right now we're on the fifth one. But there are bodies used presently that are earlier models. With a wide assortment of everything in between. It's like the panorama of different vehicles on a busy highway. An advanced person may be driving an older car. I met one with a classic Pontiac. The old saying, 'Never judge a book by it's cover,' is particularly good advice when it comes to people.

"First let's go back to the very beginning. There is an expanse of pure Love. Sparks arise like water evaporating from the ocean. They are carried by the forces to the top of celestial peaks, where they fall like raindrops. What adventures they have as the make their way back Home. The sparks are pure Love, illimitable, imperishable and infinitely powerful. Each spark is destined to accumulate experience then return. All of us have that spark of Love in our hearts. Through it we are connected to the infinite, which connects us to everything else.
Since then our sparkly selves have had plenty of adventures. The last one was a long stay on the animal planet, to develop emotions and astral bodies. We were also evolving the stirrings of intelligence. Which was beginning to grow our thought bodies.

"I glossed over the transition between kingdoms before. Let's talk about animal to human, from the Moon to Earth. With billions of years in the interim as our new home was prepared. At the end of the animal course, almost everyone in our group were astral residents. A few advanced ones lived in higher realms.
Then all of us were moved to a special nine-dimensional region. It transcends our view of time and space. A celestial incubator would be a good description. The specific divine energies there, were conducive to the development of our thought bodies. That's the secret of how animals made the quantum leap to people.
The move from the animal kingdom to the kingdom of intelligence, took billions of physical time years. While Earth was evolved to a stage suitable for our lessons to begin. But that was a very brief time from our perspective. My impression of the feeling, was sunbathing at the beach on a beautiful day.

"Now it's finally on to Earth to learn more about this thinking business. Even more important, to improve our thought bodies in the process. In the first phase the bodies never did become physical. They started out as giant bubbles of etheric material. Like one hundred foot, shimmering soap bubbles. They were more complex by the end of the era, and only about half as big. We developed

some basic senses and internal structures.
That all made perfect sense. Because there can't be a physical body without an etheric form. It's needed to convert the universal forces. Physical bodies wouldn't have lasted long anyway during that time. They wouldn't have survived the cataclysmic storms and monster volcanoes. We relished all of that energy in our etheric state.
I had a brief experience in one of those bodies. The best description I can think of is making love. Being over land or water didn't matter, because we floated over everything. That was strategic, getting an early start on our etheric forms. It took a very long time.
The first ones were manifested by advanced beings. After that they multiplied like giant cells, there weren't any boys and girls. We hopped into them and just drifted around. Being pure spirit, we loved the feeling. It was like a game that felt very good. Maybe that's why people like bumper cars at the fair. That's how we experienced physical life for a very long time.

"Once those etheric forms were far enough along, the second period got started. A new continent was formed, with a pleasant climate where life could thrive. That was important, because those bodies interacted physically with Earth. For that version, the etheric forms got a thin coating of physical matter. They were still light enough to float and we just drifted around. But we were slightly physical, so we got more input from this world.
It was a beautiful lush environment, and we methodically continued our descent into the physical realm. By the end of the second era, those bodies were much more complex. The length of that phase exceeded one hundred million years.

"Now for the third part. You got it, a new era means a new continent. This time it was the one that disappeared beneath the Indian Ocean. The 'Mahapuranas' refer to that one as Kumarika, so let's use that name. The third era was much more physical, so no more floating across water. We had to have land to disperse. Kumarika was connected to Africa, Australia, Madagascar and India. Madagascar is the only part still above water. That's an interesting place to visit in the astral, because of the extreme antiquity.
Up to that point there were no boys and girls. Reproduction was done somewhat like cells, but getting more complex. The climate started out pleasant but got colder. That made it harder to survive, we had to think more. Just turning down the thermostat improved our intelligence. Because the ones who adapted prospered, and the others dwindled in number.
It took tens of millions of years for the third phase to complete. Our bodies became considerably more physical, and complicated internally. They also shrank in size, from gigantic to a few feet taller than our present height. Our physical senses also improved significantly.

"Something wonderful happened during that era. After stepping up through primitive forms. Near the end of the third phase, we would denote them as human ancestors. What started out as animals, became rudimentary humans with reasonable intelligence. Around the middle of that period the new versions became boys and girls. Reproduction required social interaction and bonding. It was the first glimmerings of cultures and societies.
Something else happened that changed the course of humanity. Advanced beings physically interacted with us. Teaching basic survival skills, the use of fire and growing food. Things like animal husbandry, creating shelter and useful social skills. The most important part, they used spiritual techniques to improve our genetics.
But something else happened that ran our train off the rails. One group of the advanced benefactors lost sight of their mission. They started interacting with humans inappropriately. That led to conflict between them and the noble leaders. Primitive humanity was caught in the middle.
Eventually the home office got the mess sorted out. But the net result sent this particular garden down an unexpected path. Instead of measured and balanced growth. We developed intelligence too quickly, before we had a firm grasp on our emotions. Much of the turmoil since then is because of

those events. Earth was also quarantined, to prevent further spread of the anomaly. That's when we lost access to the universal language. Those events are behind the parables about Adam and Eve, the fruit of knowledge and the Tower of Babel.

"The third era was characterized by strife. Pretty much, tribal conflict for tens of millions of years. Survival pressures forced us to think and further develop intelligence. Besides having to contend with hostile neighbors. We shared the stage with prehistoric animals. They were around in dwindling numbers until the Atlantean days. When they were hunted to extinction for food and sport.
Along with the predatory animals were dangerous plants. Some could shoot poisonous thorns or used poison in some other way. The victim would be paralyzed in seconds, then the plant received the nutrients. One tree had vines like tentacles, that could actually catch animals and people. Those were very rigorous lives, and we were more animal than human. The first two eras were all fun and games. But we paid our dues in the third part.

"I've wondered how many lives we lived during that phase. My guess is over one hundred. Without digressing too far, I need to point something out. Tens of millions of years on Earth, are not necessarily that long living upstairs. Our impression of time in the physical world is somewhat of an illusion. It is an artificial structured environment. You have already had a glimpse, when you experienced the gift from our friend. Minutes seemed like hours, but it can also go in the other direction.
Another thing I think is interesting, different beings have different perceptions of time. Time runs much faster with most animals. That's why we have to speed up to commune with them. When we are raising our vibrations and it seems like time slows. It's not that time is slowing, we are speeding up.

"Let's get back to the history of humans. Now we're getting somewhere we can recognize with the fourth era. This time the continent was Atlantis. It took up a lot of the area that is now the Atlantic Ocean. It amazes me to no end, Kumarika and Atlantis aren't in school history books. Because there are mountains of evidence. Some of the distinctive flora and fauna of Australia, have their ancient origins in Kumarika. Madagascar and other places provide biological evidence.
The original Mayan and Sumerian cultures were some of the great Atlantean civilizations. The Tibetans and Native Americans are distant descendants. Some of the monolithic structures around the world are Atlantean. They had technology for reducing gravity. Many of those stone blocks would challenge our biggest modern equipment. People with picks and shovels did not build those things.
The Egyptians and even the Greeks knew a lot about Atlantis. They had detailed maps and historical documents. All of that knowledge and so much more was lost. As the ancient libraries were destroyed by each new conqueror. An ignorant population is easier to control.
The Romans took all of that to another level. With their self-absorbed focus on power and possessions. Western culture took a serious turn toward materialism. Although it's beginning to recede, that's still the dominant trait.
All throughout history the ancient knowledge was hidden and preserved. That involved great peril and sacrifice by countless people. Librarians might be sedate these days, but it was a very dangerous occupation back then. It wasn't until the Renaissance, the knowledge could be shared again. Then Western society finally began to thrive and prosper.

"Let's get back to Atlantis. It was connected to other continents, but they also had watercraft. Like usual, it was eventually demolished by volcanic and seismic activity. That was an incremental process, spanning tens of thousands of years.
To start the fourth phase, advanced beings were born in the most sophisticated bodies available. Their powerful energetic presence caused the bodies to evolve further. They did that to procreate the improved bodies for the fourth era. They did that again later for the fifth version. With Atlantis we're

much closer to the present day. Something like a few million years ago, to a little over ten thousand. We started out as intelligent animals, and finished as citizens of an advanced global society. Think neanderthal at the beginning, evolved versions of the later forms are still in use.
In the beginning, advanced beings acted as noble leaders. Getting everything off to a good start. They are the source of the legends about Norse or Greek gods. Gods did live among men, and they had far reaching abilities. Over time the leadership of Atlantis, was handed off to the most advanced humans.

"Since the beginning, the coordinators have overseen the lives of people. They will continue to do so, until we've all moved to another phase of existence. That will take place on a different planet. Throughout the program there has been careful and strategic interaction. To provide an improving succession of vehicles. As well as diverse situations in which to use them. Each time we live in them, it improves our thought bodies.
An example of how their goals are accomplished might be helpful. Let's go back some, there is a large isolated tribe. Over ten generations they have made good progress, they will be helped to prosper. Maybe animals will be sent so they have plenty to eat. Individuals will be guided to share their advances with other tribes. Advanced members of other tribes will be guided to join them. To keep the gene pools from getting stagnant.
A different tribe degrades into cannibalism and savagery. A tidal wave, disease or something like that, would be their probable future. Many critical moments in history were balanced on a thin edge. A victory in battle, meant a few tribes became a nation. A sandstorm or a blizzard tipped the scales.

"Now to the downfall of Atlantis. Over a long period of time, the excellent government became corrupt. The priests were much worse, they embraced the darkness from the lower astral. As intelligence grew so did the negative aspects. Greed, lust for power, misuse of spiritual gifts and general decadence. The entire fourth era was also characterized by strife.
Toward the end of that period we had advanced technology. It allowed us to harness universal forces on a massive scale. Disruptive factions used that technology for warfare. Causing a tremendous amount of destruction to Earth, and most of the inhabitants. They bombed each other and the rest of us, right back into the stone ages. We still haven't recovered from that and neither has Earth.
It was humanity's low point. To nearly cause our own extinction, for selfish and misguided reasons. What's interesting, the coordinators let that happen. Toddlers fall down sometimes when they're learning to walk. You can't hold their hands forever, or they will never stand on their own.

"During the peak of Atlantis there was an advanced culture. The population grew and spread around the world. We had technology, transportation, architecture, music, literature, public works, roads and things like that. The large population required us to be skilled with agriculture. We were also accomplished at selective breeding. The exotic birds of South America are examples. Also many of the fruits, vegetables and flowers we take for granted.

"A milestone was passed during the fourth phase. This class started with beings that were pure spirit. They became increasingly more physical through each step. The turning point is when spiritual aspects began developing. By the end of the course we will be spiritual beings again. Right back where we started, with one small difference. We'll have all of the experiences, knowledge and growth, as permanent aspects of our immortal selves.
Here's something that ties into this. We all have sovereign free will, it is inviolate. For example, the coordinators let a few miscreants blow up the world. Wiping out millions of years of progress. They could have easily stopped it, but did not because of free will.
It's one of the central ideas of our original creation. And it's brilliant when you look at the big picture. It promotes the fundamental goal that we all become quite unique.
On that topic I need to point something out. Free will doesn't change the nature of reality. The

universe is a manifest system governed by the forces. The quality of our lives depends on how we work with nature. We are free to stick our hand in a fire. But that won't turn out too well, because of the natures of fire and our hands. Free will does not change the laws of the universe.

"Another thing, incremental progress is built into the program. A young person will run and climb trees, that physically improves their body. But just as important, it adjusts their genetic tendencies. They go off to school and grow further, through social and intellectual challenges. Again they further unfold the genetic potential of their form. Their children may reflect that progress and their forms will improve slightly. That is fascinating when seen over a million years.

In addition to all of those things, the coordinators aren't afraid to give a nudge here and there. Or even getting their feet wet, by wading into the pond to achieve a specific goal. A good example is the unbroken line of World Teachers. The chain disappears back into the mists of time. Those who orchestrated the great religions and other important schools of thought.

"If you think you want a new continent for the fifth phase. Let's turn that giant swamp into Europe. The people of the fifth era spread around the globe in waves. From the ancient cultures that preceded the Egyptians. All the way to our present day world.

The history of Europe can be quickly summarized. One horde after another, sweeping back and forth. Conquering, enslaving, mixing cultures and genetics. That's been going on nonstop for thousands of years. I'll rest my case, pointing at the two recent World Wars.

It's all a methodical stirring of the stew. To incrementally achieve the desired advancements. A snapshot example would be France at a critical point. A squabbling group of fiefdoms became a cohesive nation. Because of their common need to defend themselves, from Nordic invaders.

"That brings us to the present and the future. When they got further along with Europe. Various groups were encouraged to pull up stakes, then move to North America and Australia. This house was built by people from Hungary. Thank goodness they brought their Old World culture here, and built this charming homestead.

Calling America the melting pot isn't too far off the mark. Because by one means or another, all of humanity's genetics were gathered into one place. An example would be the potato famine in Ireland. Many Irish immigrated here because of that tragedy. Infusing America with their unique and priceless culture.

"Which brings up a good point. Famines and wars are a living hell for us. Watching loved ones die, or our homes and life's work destroyed for nothing. Using the analogy of a forge, the tougher the metal the hotter the fire. Those soul wrenching experiences make us grow, in ways that would be impossible otherwise. And those things are always known in advance. Unbelievably, we agree to participate with free will. Because of the spiritual growth they will produce.

In Humanities class in college, the professor broke us into groups. Then we had to put together a modern take on a classic play. I took that as a green light, to turn the Greek tragedy 'Agamemnon' into a musical romp. There's a timeless line from that play, 'He who suffereth, shall learn.' That says it all. Because the big picture for us is evolving thought, and suffering is no obstacle.

As to the future of the fifth era. There will be an increase in compassion, psychic abilities, empathy, discrimination and intuition. From here on out the important improvements will be spiritual. My guess as to the number of fifth era lives, would be in the dozens.

"The continent rising from the Pacific will be the setting for the sixth phase. As usual the previous home will be demolished. Much of the United States will be broken apart.

During the sixth phase, peace on Earth will be achieved. There will finally be a brotherhood of man. That's when we will start to progress by leaps and bounds. Racial lines will continue to blur, and the distinctions between the sexes will diminish. Animals will no longer be used as a food source.

Another thing of interest and importance. Enough spiritual progress will be made, for advanced beings to manifest physically. They will provide wisdom and guidance on a regular basis. Finally a solid bridge between here and the higher realms. One that will greatly accelerate our progress. The sixth phase will be a staircase to spirituality. With further development of all of our nested bodies.

"During that era we will venture far into space in physical vehicles. Beings from other worlds will visit openly. Something else that's important, the lower areas of the astral will get cleaned out. There will be fewer undesirable creations. And more people will roll up their sleeves, to clean up what's already there. Removing that murky sludge, will revolutionize Earth and humanity.

We will also get some help from above. Because anyone that doesn't have a viable thought body at that point. Will be relocated to another planet, to start the intelligence course again. Along with all of the native astral residents. That's why the physical moon was destroyed after the animal program. Those without viable astral bodies, had to leave and try again somewhere else. The sixth phase will be measured in thousands of years. This whole thing has been accelerating with each step upwards.

"The seventh era will start with a spiritual humanity. They will have solved all of their practical needs. Unlimited power, and advanced technology for producing goods. There will be efficient transportation that doesn't impact the environment. One thing that caught my eye was a small device on a belt. That will allow someone to fly. There will be no pollution of any kind. Waste products will be dispersed at a molecular level.

We will move freely between the physical and the higher realms. By the end of the era we will no longer be technically physical. At the very end, we will all be living in the permanent thought world or above. The energetic realms will be even more fantastic and glorious than now. Then we'll all scamper off to another planet, for more adventures and another step up the ladder.

"I have two comments on all of this. I knew we didn't evolve from apes, but I had no idea what actually happened. We don't have anything more to do with apes, than with rabbits. They are working through their animal phase here. Then they will relocate to a different planet for the intelligence program.

We climbed the animal mountain in seven steps. Although the diversity of usable bodies made each phase different for everyone. And as usual with nature, there were plenty of exceptions. Each phase started out with primitive forms, then improved them over countless generations. They became increasingly more complex and difficult to use.

At first they were basic etheric bubbles. Those developed and became slightly physical, eventually becoming primitive invertebrates. Then we progressed from simple worms, to things like lobsters and octopi. Basic tiny fish came along, with the exciting new feature of skeletons. In time they turned into incredible creatures, like great white sharks.

Amphibians followed right in the middle of the program. We straddled the lower and higher forms, right on the tipping point. Don't let the size of frogs and toads fool you. They are very powerful because of that balancing act. They also have a natural tendency, to use their psychic abilities cooperatively. Adult amphibians can breathe air, so we could finally start exploring solid ground.

"Reptiles were next. We could live on land and had more flexibility in our diets. You have to respect the vigor and persistence of reptiles. But temperature was our Achilles' heel. So we traded in the scales for feathers. We became birds, with those fancy warm-blooded bodies. The cost for that was considerably higher food requirements. So we developed flight, to give ourselves a survival edge. We also got big improvements in our brains and nervous systems.

Then we finally made it to mammals, that took over a billion years. The bodies we started with were more like lemurs than apes. Those were evolved to various humanoid forms, like rough drafts of human ancestors. The whole point of the exercise was developing astral bodies. So the final exam was using those as functioning vehicles.

"The second thing I wonder, is how kundalini fits into all of this. Nothing was mentioned in the book. My experience suggests it provides a new variable in the equation. Someday I hope to see how it all ties together."
I asked with a smile, "Now wasn't that, a nice romantic talk in front of the fireplace?"
She smiled, "That was very interesting, and not what I was expecting either. Let's make finding that library one of our goals."

She asked, "Do you feel like talking about intelligence?"
"Sure, that ties into all of this. Because the whole point of this rambling adventure, is developing intelligence. Here's something to consider. Despite the difficulties and tremendous effort involved. We come here to use these physical bodies, because they have astonishing creative powers. Every time we think, we grow and develop our thought bodies. Every emotion does that to our astral bodies. Every selfless act does it to our higher bodies. They literally grow, improve and evolve. Pursuing a specific avenue of thought like math, produces entirely new facets. Each with unlimited room for growth.
We're taking an incisive course of instruction that lasts hundreds of millions of years. To evolve and perfect our thought bodies. A vehicle with stupendous powers, we can use to express our consciousness. When fully developed their only limit is our imagination. They are not all-knowing, but from our perspective they might as well be. They are well within our reach too, being directly linked to our well developed astral bodies.

"So let me share some thoughts about intelligence. We had a small core to start with from the animal planet. Along with our basic thought bodies. The time in the incubator filled them with the divine possibilities of Love. Our task on Earth is to awaken and grow those seeds of potential. So our thought bodies will mature to their full glory.
Scrambling to survive on Kumarika, ruthlessly forced us to think. Societies really thrived during Atlantis, things got much more complicated. Especially when formal education began. That's the first step on the path to wisdom. Thinking is only the beginning. About halfway through the fourth phase on Atlantis, we had all kinds of dandy thoughts. The problem is we hadn't learned to control them. We needed two new skills for that, discrimination and wisdom.

"Let's look at a specific instance. A good example is people in the astral, who refuse to accept that they've died. The ones who believe that because of some convoluted idea. One that works fine, is the firm decision there's nothing after death. We live, we die that's it.
They just grabbed that out of the air and ran with it. Because anyone that takes even a cursory look, could not have that firm conviction. They did not use discrimination to control their thoughts. They let their emotions do the driving, and that's the tail wagging the dog. The more emotion they pour into that misconception. The more powerful it becomes. Especially if they try to convince others.
After they leave their physical bodies for good. Their reality turns into a conundrum. There's nothing after death, so they can't be dead. It's a wonderful loop of illogic, that literally wraps around them like a web. There are many other ways, people fully commit themselves to flawed beliefs.

"Possibly the worst thing that can happen to someone, is to firmly believe they know everything. It's another of the many challenges faced while developing intelligence. They are exposed to a sophistry that resonates. Then they decide they have all of the answers. Of their own free will they build a shell around themselves. The more emotion they put into it, the harder it becomes. If they try to convince others their shell gets even thicker.
It's common for them to spend most of their afterlives, no higher than the middle regions of the astral. Not just one life cycle, several. Until that emotional shell finally erodes. It's a pathetic dilemma, and a self-created stalemate because of free will.

"There's a reason why that happens. All creatures have a basic survival imprint, an emotional conviction that they know everything. Although it's unfounded, it gives them confidence to face whatever life throws at them. Life on Earth is an ongoing struggle between emotions and intelligence. In the beginning, emotions are kings of the castle. And thinking is like a mouse scurrying around in the cellar. When intelligence finally takes precedence, emotions cling to their authority. They would rather have a stalemate than lose. They don't want the person to leave the astral, the realm of emotions.

Of course an assumption we know everything is flawed. All of us put together, isn't one molecule of what there is to know. There's a very rare exception to that. If someone can use their fourth body, they will have indirect access to everything. The self-absorbed emotional fallacy that we know everything. Becomes the expansive, all inclusive Knowing.

"That brings up an interesting point. Anything that anyone knows, is accessible to everyone. If someone knows something, everyone does on a higher level. That's also behind the sage advice, that we cultivate honesty and integrity. It is impossible to deceive, it has never been done. For one thing, deception is actually visible in the astral. There is none on the third floor and up. You will find people trying in the lower astral, lifelong habits are hard to break. They don't realize it's a pathetic farce. No one is even slightly deceived except themselves. And they're stuck right where they are because of it.

If I could give someone just one piece of advice. It would be to cultivate scrupulous personal integrity. Work diligently, to make it an ingrained reflexive habit. We can never advance until that happens. It's the pure spring from which everything flows. It will also ensure that we go up, instead of down.

Some fool themselves into believing, they will change after they die. That trap catches a lot of people. We do not change at all. We are exactly who we were, just before we left. What's most important, it's considerably more difficult to change after that. In fact it's almost impossible. Which is why we come here in the first place.

"There's a sought after tipping point in the growth of intelligence. It's the realization we know absolutely nothing. That's the first step toward wisdom. There are two aspects to thought. One is the practical side, the other is the spiritual. The spiritual side is wisdom. Realizing that intelligence is a tool, then beginning the long process of learning to wield it properly.

Intelligence is a tool, plain and simple. It has it's uses and it's limitations, just like any other tool. During it's development an interesting point is always reached. We have the tool, but we haven't learned to use it properly. And we don't realize how dangerous it can be, especially to ourselves.

Intelligence is an invaluable servant to our spirits, but as a master it's fraught with peril. Thoughts can set us free, or chain us in a deep dungeon. They can also restrict us by defining arbitrary limits. The way someone can lift a car to save a child, is because they don't stop to think. Animals are even better at doing the impossible. Because they are not as rigid in their thinking.

When I was growing up, I pursued intelligence as an end in itself. That's like worshiping a screwdriver. I greatly limited the progress I could make. Wisdom is intelligence used by our spirits. Strangely enough, meditating more and reading less took things to another level.

"Now let's forget all of that. We'll go have another puff and get some more mead. Then you can tell me some more fun secrets, from when you were growing up with Nancy." We talked further that night on matters sacred and profane. Eventually the fire was out and so were we.

CHAPTER 22 - VALERIE'S VILLA

As a child I spent time with my grandfather. He introduced me to industrial skills, equipment and vehicle repair, the use of hand and power tools. I picked up more, participating in countless construction and repair projects. We used tractors daily at the orchard and I met my first chainsaw. A two-man Disston, it weighed seventy pounds with the bar.

My profession involved plumbing, pneumatics, hydraulics, refrigeration, boilers, furnaces, electricity and precision mechanical devices.

All of that paid off at the Villa. I was prepared for the landscaping challenges, the building maintenance, the equipment repair and the assorted construction projects.

While Val worked on the house, I began restoring the property. Raking a mountain range of leaves and trimming countless loads of brush. The leaves went into a long row of compost bins. The brush was piled in suitable places for wildlife habitat. By midsummer the front half of the Villa was presentable.

There was a quaint garden shed, with plenty of room for tools and supplies. After a thorough cleaning and fresh paint. We added an efficient potting bench and more shelves.

The orchard had eight apple trees, two cherry and one Italian plum. We added more of those along with pears and peaches. The trellising in the vineyard was restored, it was a thing of beauty when we finished. I hugged Val, "How are those dreams of a Villa coming along?"

There were flower beds edged with mortared stone, we added more. Every window in the house had one just outside. Many others were scattered around the property.

We poured a large concrete patio near the back door, with embedded paving stones. Then built an arbor and a generous roughsawn table. That gave us an outdoor dining room. There were flowering vines and ornamental lights in the arbor. It was a very nice space, we had many wonderful meals there. It was also good for parties, weather permitting.

After admiring one at a State Park, we added a large stone fireplace at one end of the arbor. With a cook top, an oven and swinging brackets to hang pots over the fire. It also served as a windbreak, which helped all year long. A crackling fire added to the ambiance any time.

By the end of the second year we had a greenhouse. It was a big project, but a good investment of time and money. Paying for itself in organic produce in a few years. It was a delight on a sunny winter day. That was my favorite thing to share with guests. Friends visiting ours led to helping on others. I enjoyed all construction projects, but greenhouses were my favorite.

The dimensions were twenty-four, by forty-eight feet. We partitioned it in half and kept one side from freezing. That was fairly expensive, but it was wonderful harvesting vegetables in winter. Thanks to the greenhouse, we ate fresh organic produce throughout the year.

There was supplemental lighting over a heated bench, for seedling flats. We started thousands of annual flowers and vegetables. We liked to have plenty to share with friends. Their visit was a good chance to have lunch and chat.

A bench with a humidity cloche allowed us to replicate perennials. Eventually we had ornamental shrubs and trees, to the four corners of the Villa. Those were also fun to share. Val's pride and joy was a wide variety of house plants. We cycled them back and forth to the greenhouse, to keep them looking nice. They brightened up every room and brought endless enjoyment. Her yoga den was especially nice.

Keeping tropical perennials was another frost-free benefit. We had aloe, peppercorns, bananas, limes, tangerines and several others. The controlled environment of the greenhouse, allowed us to work closely with the plant world. They benefit and so do we, everyone wins.

Yeasts are one-celled residents of the fungus world. The types used in fermented potables have an interesting property. They convert sugars into ethyl alcohol. I was committed to Val's dream of a villa. In keeping with that, I began making wine, cider and mead. Already having a vineyard and cellar were big factors. Another motivation was cost savings, we produced libations at a fraction of retail prices. Between dinners and gifts, we made around two hundred gallons a year.
Not competition wine, jugs of robust cottage wine. We used other fruits as well, plums, blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, peaches, cherries, blueberries, and pears. Those were good for aperitifs and made excellent gifts.

Hard cider was the most popular at dinners. We made it in small barrels from our own apples. There was a barrel stand in the kitchen. We also made sparkling cider in champagne bottles. Mead was a close second in popularity. We bought the honey in bulk from a local apiary. Champagne yeast was used for that, it has a high tolerance for alcohol. After a year in the bottle it was nectar. It got even better, but usually did not last much longer. I kept a secret stash with some age for those special occasions.
We were not complete savages. In addition to the homemade, there were reputable wines for our guests. They were usually still corked after the dinners. But there was always a collection of empty gallon jugs.

The basement was the perfect place to work. In a few years we built up a nice varied cellar. In the beginning we bought fruit at farmer's markets. Over time we used our own because it was organic. Producing the juice was easy using a Champion juicer. The health food store special ordered one for us. The pulp and all of our produce scraps, were welcome additions to the compost bins.
I assembled these in batches of one gallon jugs. It was quick and easy, reducing the amount of equipment. It worked for us because of our small scale. That also helped us make a wide variety of recipes. "Racking" is a vintner's term, for decanting the wine off the sediment. That was simple using the gallon jugs. Just a careful filtered pour into another sterile jug.
We did not use amendments or sterilizers, the stoppers had check valves to vent pressure. Everything was filtered and vacuumed before bottling. Some people with an intolerance for wine, are actually allergic to the sulfur sterilizing compounds. We had friends in that category who appreciated our organic approach.

Most we kept in the jugs but bottling went quickly. One major task is washing and sterilizing the glassware. We did that efficiently using homemade gadgets. Our guests enjoyed the cellar and so did we. Sending them home with several bottles of this and that. I found it to be a relaxing and productive hobby. It added a nice flair to our dinners and the Villa.
For Christmas I bent the rules to produce sacraments, a spiritual experience in a bottle. They were shared with friends who understood their use. We heard interesting stories over the years.

The herb garden was restored to it's former glory, then expanded over time. We added a lily pond, with a fountain and a variety of aquatic ornamentals. I liked all of our flowers, but the water lilies were special.
We considered fresh herbs essential for cooking. Keeping a selection in the greenhouse for winter use. In the herb garden were tea and medicinal varieties, as well as a full complement of culinaries. Soon after we met I introduced Val to herb teas. We enjoyed blending our own and sharing them as gifts.
Val gained skill as an herbalist, helping friends with a wide range of needs. Educating them on effective, natural alternatives to prescriptions. She had a special cabinet with an assortment of dried herbs, infusions and tinctures.

I grew cannabis discretely, producing connoisseur grade flowers. Using the organic nutrient solutions

my friends developed. We used them on all of the herbs and many other edible crops. They gave me a selection of exceptional cannabis genetics. We narrowed that to three. A sativa that was peppy, an indica that was mellow and a good mix. It was shared with an inner circle of friends. The quality was excellent, it was organic and it eliminated outside contacts. Their end was participation in a trim party. Those were always fun, good food, good music and good friends.

The symbiosis between cannabis and humans is worth considering. It is the queen of useful annuals, revered throughout history. The fiber, medicinally, recreationally and as a sacrament. The hemp fiber is a standout in the natural world. It has always been cultivated for that purpose, rope, cloth, paper, sails, the original jeans. Hemp fibers can be easily separated by soaking in plain water. That has always been a universal cottage industry. Without it's easy cultivation, durability and strength, sailing ships would have been limited in range.
Selective breeding led to potent strains, hashish became a commodity. Unlike regional currency it was always welcome in trade. Hash was spread globally by sailors, a small box would last months.

We had benches in the herb garden to enjoy the flowers and butterflies. On a warm spring day there was a special, vitalizing atmosphere. Val liked spending time there with guests, giving them a boost after months of winter. At certain times it was the most powerful spot at the Villa. One perfect spring day, the atmosphere was dripping with creativity. We were watching clouds of butterflies, foraging in the delicate flowers.
I impulsively cupped my hands together, parting them after a few minutes. Revealing a glowing faceted ruby, the size of a baseball. Val marveled at it. I did not hand it to her, it was not quite physical. I charged it with Love until it became intensely bright. Then stood and threw it skyward exclaiming, "Love For All!"
When it reached the top of it's arc, there was a flash like a soundless explosion. Golden light shot in every direction. We watched in wonder, then laughed and hugged. Val taught me how to make things, by streaming energy into the physical world. But that was one of my own twists.

As soon as we moved in. A wild and woolly kitten decided to grace us with her presence. She was our front line of defense against rodents, her name was Tiffany. She took that job very seriously, a matter of pride. Also supervising all gardening and construction projects, as well as the assorted daily chores.
I mediated a truce with Noni and she got a new lease on life. Having a cohort and plenty of outdoors to explore. They were both dear friends and companions. Tiff was also my yoga pal, except when she pounced on me during a pose.

We communicated easily and became good friends. House cats are very special felines. The others came up through the animal ranks here on Earth. But the beings that become house cats are an interesting exception. They are currently taking the intelligence course, on a different planet in our galaxy. They come here to find adversity, because their planet is peaceful. I knew about taking a life on other planets, to pursue some special goal. But it is usually in the same kingdom. They are doing it out of desperation. If they do not develop a written language soon. They may not have enough time left, and will fail the intelligence course.

A visit to their home world is by invitation only. I was permitted a tour because Tiff vouched for me. Helping so many cats here and there was good too. Their planet is beautiful and pristine. They look a lot like us but with short fur. The shelters were simple and natural, there were huts in the large trees. I saw wood fires, basic tools and utensils. They are vegetarians with beautiful, well tended gardens. My overall impression was open and friendly, but innocent. Like a global Polynesian culture before Westerners arrived. They never developed technology or written communication. Like most planets it is peaceful, but they are somewhat at a standstill.

They need a boost at this point. So the counselors at their life reviews, sometimes suggest a house cat life on Earth. If they think the shoe might fit. The main reason is to observe our society. They prefer to live with us for a closeup look. I always took the time to explain what I was doing and why. Cats ask the most interesting questions. Their thought processes follow different lines than ours.
They want to get things moving on their world. The big picture benefit to them, they will be the movers and shakers when they return home. They also make significant spiritual progress, because of the challenges and adversity.
While they are here, they progress through Earth's astral and thought levels. They have their own regions, as a general rule humans are not welcome. A cat chaperon attesting to your character is the exception. It was very nice seeing some of my dear friends again.

I did some gardening when I was young, mostly flowers. I had dreamed of exploring the world of horticulture. Thanks to my one true love, I had a forty acre canvas to paint. There was a neglected area laid out for vegetable gardening. Raised beds, trellises and the faint outlines of strawberry and asparagus patches. I measured everything and made a large ink drawing at my drafting table. There is a translucent paper draftsmen use. By placing a sheet over the ink drawing, we made our garden plan every year.

A short growing season was a factor. We had removable cold frames for some beds, they bought us a month in spring and fall. The real help was the frost-free area in the greenhouse. We timed the seed flats, so the plants were optimum size at last frost. The tomatoes were flowering in one gallon pots when we moved them outside.
It took two years to get the compost factory going. After that everything went very well. We managed insects without poisons. Using barriers, deterrent solutions and strategies for specific pests. We also felt that some damage was worth chemical-free food.
There were fences and netting against assorted animals. Birds and rabbits were easy, raccoons tested our mettle. We trenched out raised beds and lined them with galvanized mesh. The tops were enclosed with removable wire fence panels. We were finally able to harvest melons, berries and corn.

For storage we had freezers in the basement. The root cellar was priceless, we also canned and dehydrated. With varieties we leaned toward the European heirloom standards. But we also liked trying new hybrids, some were outstanding. The taste and quality was far beyond store produce. Picking at perfect ripeness shortly before use, set the bar even higher. It was a joy to prepare and serve them, they were top shelf.

On the fruit side we had strawberries, gooseberries, currants, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. The trees were apples, cherries, peaches, plums and pears. The original vineyard had wine grapes, we added table varieties.
The produce came in an avalanche from early summer through first frost. We were always busy processing fruits and vegetables. Staying up late was part of the program. We froze as much as possible. It was quick and easy, everything kept well. We preferred frozen produce over canned, let alone the effort. We grew considerably more than our needs. There is a true satisfaction in sharing high quality fruits and vegetables.

Flower gardening is a world in itself. We liked the long-blooming, easy care standards. Flowering trees, shrubs and bulbs also provided easy maintenance blooms. We never failed to enjoy the early flowers like crocus and forsythia. With their splashes of color against the snow, heralding the coming of spring.

Ponds are a hub for wildlife. The one at the Villa was two acres, fed by a creek across the back of

the property. The overflow was well designed, the level could be adjusted.
The first thing was to run an underground power cable. So we could use tools and work lights. It was common to work on projects after dark. During the first summer we lowered the pond level. There was still water in the deepest part for the aquatic life. We also ran a paddle aerator. The muck on the exposed bottom was thick, after years of neglect. We piled it on a bank with a construction pump. Because of other things we only spent a week on that project. But that gave us a small mountain of very rich material.
We used it to rejuvenate the horticultural beds. That worked so well, we did it every few years. It was a messy job, we had to hose each other off. But when all was said and done we were smiling. Because all of the plants thrived on it.

We landscaped the pond's edge with aquatic and margin plants. To provide habitat for the fish and frogs. Some areas were terraced with stones and railroad ties. Then filled with flowers and ornamentals.
The most ambitious project was a large deck extending over the water. If we were not inside, that was the first place to look. We even slept there now and then in a double sleeping bag. On a full moon summer night, the chorus of night birds and frogs was magic. So far from town there was less scattered light in the sky. The stars and planets were very bright, it was a good place to enjoy the night sky. Occasionally it started raining. That was fun too, our bed felt snug once we ran inside.

The electric power permitted a fountain for beauty and aeration. It also provided decorative lighting and an outlet for various conveniences. Another important use was a tank deicer in winter. We enclosed a small area with timbers at the pond's edge. Then kept it from freezing with the deicer.
In deep winter that was the best wildlife viewing of the year. There were supplemental foods and mineral blocks nearby. The real advantage was the State Forest with all of that wildlife. Over the years, dozens of species discovered that winter oasis. They passed it on to their offspring, the same with flying visitors. Each generation became more accustomed to our presence. We sat quietly on the deck in parkas, while animals came out to eat scattered dog food. We were always thrilled, sitting a few feet from foxes, minks and many other wild friends.
Something interesting happens with animals in deep winter. The territorial rules go out the window. Species that would not be in sight of each other in summer, eat side by side in winter. It is always fun to see, a taste of things to come.

Val mentioned enjoying photography when she was young. I surprised her with a professional camera and lenses. The deck was the perfect place for wildlife photography. We could not wait to see the prints. The exceptional ones were enlarged and hung in groups. The diversity of our wild friends made quite an impression.
Something else was fun at the pond, playing the flute. Sometimes it affected the wildlife. One evening during twilight, we saw rabbits hopping from all directions. There were over one hundred sitting together on a knoll. Listening to the Telemann "Fantasias for Flute". Another time we saw hundreds of frogs swimming toward the deck. They floated around us like an audience, time slowed a bit. There were many other incidents. Some involved insects such as bees, butterflies or dragonflies.

CHAPTER 23 - THE HARVEST

We found an injured box turtle while hiking in the forest. When it was restored, I kissed it and told it with utmost sincerity, "I Love You." While sending as much Love as possible. Val did the same for good measure. That sends the animal off with a good bump. A seed of higher consciousness that will blossom to their benefit. I still had some restorative energy going, so I hugged Val and gave her some. We were quiet on the way home, being caught up in a spiritual reverie.

After dinner we settled on the couch. Val asked, "So how does the look work?" She had seen me help a few animals. If they are conscious I put them to sleep. To stop their suffering and make them quiescent.

I smiled, "That's a very good question. After the bully incident in high school, I thunk mightily on that subject. I figured out what's going on, it's a potent type of hypnosis. Thought processes are electrical in nature, although the current is microscopic. Given sufficient intensity, it is possible to override an other's thoughts. Just like a more powerful magnet can reshape a weaker one's field. Magnets are a good comparison. That's what happened in gym class. My runaway emotions cranked up the dial, and I put him to sleep."

Val was wondering so I asked, "Do I have your permission to show you what I mean?"

She got a big smile and said, "Yes."

I looked deeply in her eyes, then talked about a hawk we helped. As I did she took of her blouse and folded it neatly. Laying it on the arm of the couch. I kept talking about the hawk as if nothing happened.

In a moment her eyes got big, "You made me do that!"

As she put her top on I laughed, "You're lucky it was only your blouse. Besides I didn't make you, I encouraged you. It takes a lot to make a person do something, they have an aversion to. I doubt that would have worked if we were out in public.

"I can't say I'm much of an expert on the subject. I only use it for a few things, anesthesia, public speaking and to raise someone's vibrations. Even then, sparingly."

"What do you mean, public speaking."

"The process is based on the fact that everything is connected. The turtle and I were already connected, before we found it. Finding it wasn't random. It called for help and on some level I heard it. That's why we took that shortcut through the bushes.

Looking into it's eyes improved our connection, like adjusting a radio dial. That way a focused thought from me, will influence the turtle's very weak thought processes. The more power I use, the more influence. It takes a lot more to put a dog to sleep, compared to a turtle.

I have no idea what the limits are, I only use as little as possible. There's an order to the universe. I would rather make a small ripple than a big splash.

"As for public speaking, the same thing is true. All of the people were connected when they woke up that morning. Gathering together strengthened that connection. My public speaking use, is to further improve the connection. Usually not to have some particular influence. When people have a natural talent for that, it's called charisma. Many of them become entertainers, because that's a good match for their personalities.

I learned about the public speaking part during a speech in high school. Because I used way too much, I hypnotized the teacher and the whole class. They all knew something strange happened, but didn't know exactly what.

I'll be perfectly honest and admit, I was irresponsible at first. I misused that sacred gift by influencing others, just to see if I could. But I learned my lesson, because it always came back to bite me. Since then I've been on the straight and narrow path, which I highly recommend.

I will say in my own defense. My pranks were nothing, compared to the havoc I could have caused. If

I had really set my mind to it. Had I followed that tempting path, we would not be talking right now. I would have traded everything for nothing. That was the first of the thirty-three decisions on my quest to find you. Speech classes there and college gave me opportunities to find the balance. That has really paid off when I've needed it professionally."

Val smiled and asked, "Do you know how the healing works?"
"Yes sort of, I participate but it's still beyond me. Our bodies heal themselves automatically, by using energy and the pattern provided by our etheric blueprints. What's needed in this case is a lot more energy. That much energy must radiate through our heart center.
The technique involves supercharging their etheric form, and advanced manifestation techniques. Again a higher self is driving, but I always watch with interest. It's like the partnership between a head chef and a prep cook. I've learned quite a bit about etheric forms and manifestation. Which also helps the process.
The considerable energy involved means the setting must be right. Only nature or someone further along than me, can provide that much energy. That's also why purity and balance are essential. It has to be completely selfless, it would be physically dangerous otherwise. Like too much current through too much resistance, will melt something. It's a very serious business."

Later she told me, "I'm still vibrating from that healing energy." Then with a laugh, "I'll take some more of that any time."
"What does it feel like to you?"
"A mild version of astral sex, but it's been going on ever since we were hiking."
I laughed, "No wonder you like it. In the future I'll give you any that's still bouncing around."
She asked, "What does it feel like to you?"
"My arms and hands feel like they're twice as big, it's a very strange sensation. And there's an extremely high vibration. Way past buzzing, more like a ringing."
Val smiled, "That's it, I feel like I'm ringing like a tuning fork. How long does it last?"
"A nap does it for me, but running or hiking is a good way to infuse it. You'll feel very good the next day, like after a couple day fast." Then we looked at each other, shaking our heads and laughing.

She asked, "Where do you think good deeds go?"
"That's something I've thought about. But I've felt reluctant to pursue it for some reason. My guess is the third floor, maybe the animals I've helped are there. That would be a real good start on heaven for me. Our friend described the upper level as 'thoughts that were accomplished.'
I've got another one that's about the same. All of the service you did, working at the store. I know you did a lot to help people, where does all of that end up? This sounds like something we should look into, what do you think?"
"Any Ideas how?"
"Let's be thinking about it, and maybe we'll get an inspiration."

As we got ready for bed I asked, "Are you in the mood to try an experiment?"
She smiled, "What?"
"Once we get out, let's focus on that healing energy. Maybe it will take us where the good deeds go."
She liked the idea, we followed up on it. When Val was out we held hands, we did that when we traveled together. It helped with communication and focus. It raised our vibrations significantly, just like in the physical. It also helped us stay together, which gave us problems at first.
Then we tuned to the ringing, I held the memory of the turtle in my mind. After a few seconds something felt very different. We looked at each other, wondering.
We were whisked away, there was a sensation of high speed movement. Despite us being shielded when we stopped, the light was uncomfortably bright. In comparison, the sun is a flickering candle. The brightness was Love, we were much closer to the source.

After a short time we adjusted somewhat, I could make out basic shapes. Our host towered over us, others behind were observing with interest. They were brilliant balls of light, five times our size. Sparkling stars gorgeous beyond description.
It was the speaker from the thought world lecture. They noticed me in the audience and kept me in their thoughts. I suspect they did that with everyone. A beautiful voice said, "Welcome."
I sent Love to them all and responded, "Hello to everyone." Then to our host, "Thank you for the presentation on humans. It changed my life."
"Thank you for attending. It was pleasing to have a guest from the physical world."
Everything became clear. Why we are purifying ourselves, seeking growth experiences and acts of service. If that is where we are headed, hundreds of difficult lives would be nothing.
Still holding Val's hand I asked, "Would you tell us where we are?"
They responded with kindness, "You were wondering about the good deeds. They are selfless, no refinement is necessary. They come directly here. All that is worthy arrives in due course."

Our host changed something and I could see better. Our surroundings were changing rapidly, a multi-dimensional kaleidoscope with us inside. The patterns were minutely intricate, and indescribably beautiful. But quite frankly it made no sense. There was nothing for a frame of reference, I could not decipher six dimensions.
Our host changed something, and I was surrounded by the good deeds. Each one the live action reality. There were thousands and I was experiencing all of them at once. It was winding me up. Our host changed something, I was back holding hands with Val.

After a brief time I settled down asking, "What realm is this?"
"According to your system, this is the fourth floor. We mediate the spiritual and the manifest. Among other roles it is the world of the harvest. Where the results of your labor are summed to your being. The good deeds and service are improving your forms. Your presence here, proves they are active. It is our honor to welcome you."
They all changed into constantly blooming flowers of incomparable beauty. The lotus flower is often used in the spiritual literature of India. I suspect the authors saw that awe inspiring sight.
I thought I was holding hands with Val. But when I looked she was some distance away, also a giant sparkling flower. Her visible thoughts made it clear, I appeared the same. But unlike our hosts some of our petals were missing. Those bodies were not finished yet.

Val wanted to ask something, "What can I do, to bring more Love into the world?"
"Love will guide you."
We all shared a moment.
I asked, "Would you describe our three highest bodies?"
"Yes, but let's start on this floor. This is the world of our intuitive bodies, they permit direct understanding. Another tool for your toolbox. It also contains the blueprints for our complete vehicle.
In addition, it preserves the essence of our individuality. The unique characteristics we have patiently collected. The growing storehouse of experiences, emotions and thoughts.
The fifth floor is home to our spiritual bodies. The floors correspond to the states of matter. Solid matter is the theme of the physical world. Liquid emotions define the astral world. Vaporous cognition is suited to the thought world. Etheric intuition is the theme here. Our hyper-etheric spiritual body lives on the fifth floor. The molecular celestial body calls the sixth floor home. Our atomic divine body is focused on the seventh."

I asked, "What can we do to improve our highest bodies?"
"Nothing is required, they have always been complete. Waiting, watching and guiding.
For our consummate body to function, we must establish three pathways. When you were

individualized. A permanent pathway was established, between your thought and spiritual bodies. When you willfully used your astral body. You established a temporary pathway, between there and your celestial body. When you activated your evolutionary force. You established a temporary pathway, between your physical and divine bodies. The temporary pathways persist, as long as those bodies function. You can visit the seventh floor whenever you are ready."
"What will happen if we become conscious there?"
"You will be aware of your complete self. It will be an end and a new beginning. Everything will change, and nothing will change."
I pressed, "How can we do that?"
"Every being must attain their own evolution. As always, will it, think it, desire it and put in the work."
I asked lightly, "Then can we create a solar system?"
The was a feeling of merriment, "Helping hands are always welcome, in the endless gardens of heaven. There are many ways to serve and grow."

I asked, "Will there be a new planet for the intuition program?"
"No, Mercury will be our next home."
"Why Mercury?"
"The solar winds will cause these bodies to mature. Our present form is similar to a seed."
The implications of that sent a ripple through all of us. I asked, "Will that course take as long as the intelligence program?"
"It will be lees than one million years, from the intensity."
"How can we prepare?"
"Consider service, purity, balance and intuition."
"Any tips or advice?"
"Study nature, it is all there."
We had a moment of communion. After a bit our host suggested, "It would be well if you returned now."
I had forgotten I had a physical body. I smiled and said, "Thank you very much for helping us visit." Beaming Love and appreciation to all of them.
They swept us away with a tidal wave of joy. After a brief feeling of motion we returned to our bodies.

Still highly energized we went downstairs. Val made hot chocolate while I lit the fireplace. We snuggled on the couch sipping cocoa and nibbling cookies. We had not said a word. Finally she said, "Wow." We laughed until we were out of breath. It took us a week to feel normal after that. In truth we were never the same, in a good way.
At breakfast she said, "Now I understand why yoga is so important. That might have made me unstable without it."
I suggested, "It might not even have been possible. The connections between our bodies have to be active. Those develop from doing yoga."

She was thinking then said, "I'm going to get serious about yoga."
I laughed and exclaimed, "Oh no, I've created a monster! You asked the big guy, how to bring more Love into the world. Now you're getting fired up about yoga, hmm?"
She looked at me, smiling and nodding.
I said, "I think I figured something out. Some of the times I made it to the thought world, were nights after I helped an animal. I've always tried to dissipate that energy. Instead, maybe we should do what we did last night. Use it to blast off with, what do you think?"
She smiled, "I think it's worth a try. The worst that can happen, I'll get some more of that energy."

CHAPTER 24 - THE FIRST SUMMER CONCERT

While planting flowers one morning, Val suggested a summer dinner party. We talked about themes, I threw out an idea. Involve music to raise the vibrations naturally. We agreed on a Northern Italian menu, that helped with the decorations. Except for Al and Nancy, the guests were invited based on musical facility. We planned a concert after the dinner, with them as the stars. There were twenty guests so there was a nice audience.

Shortly after we moved in, Val gave me a piano for my birthday. After it settled into the house we had it professionally tuned. It was fun playing again. I brushed the cobwebs off my sight reading, in case someone wanted an accompanist. For that one we went highbrow, mixing it up with popular music on different years. We set up a stage in a corner of the great room, where the acoustics were good.

There was regional Italian music playing as a background. A sideboard with glassware held an assortment of Italian wines. Imported beers swam in a tub filled with ice. We encouraged our guests to help themselves. We worked together in the kitchen, I did the prep and she wore the big hat. We both served and the dinner went smooth as silk. Dessert was held until after the concert.

We ate early, so we could wander around outside as the sun set. Valerie's Villa was a work in progress that summer. We shared our plans as we strolled. Val was happy seeing her dreams coming true. We went to work inside, so our guests could explore by themselves. The air was always fresh and vibrant at the Villa. Everyone got a good charge. It was a merry bunch filtering back to the great room.

We had arranged the couches and chairs to face the stage. There was an air of anticipation. Val welcomed everyone, asking me to break the ice. I had the jitters until I stood but managed to relax. I welcomed everyone again, introducing the selections. In keeping with the summer theme. I prepared two piano pieces, Chopin's "Butterfly" study, and the Rachmaninoff arrangement of "Flight of the Bumblebee".

Both works tested my abilities, but I rode herd and got them in the corral. I doubt they would have impressed at a conservatory. But they were fine and fun for that setting. Our guests were too kind with their appreciation, Val gave me a big smile. With that the concert was underway.

We heard Renaissance music arranged for guitar and recorder. Delicate and haunting, they cast a musical spell over us. The cellist had talked to Val, surprising me with a Marais piece. She played Prokofiev's "Sonata for Solo Cello", for an encore. My favorite Russian composer, a double treat. We took a break then, everyone got up to stretch. Some went behind the barn for a smoke, it was a mellow scene.

Inside we topped our glasses and got settled again. Mark played Torroba's "Madronos", a timeless vignette. For an encore he played original flamenco, his pick was on fire.

Four guests played together as a wind ensemble. They did an excellent job with a Beethoven arrangement.

The violinist called to ask about playing a duet, a peppy allegro from a Mozart sonata. Val picked up the piano part so I could review the music. The sonata went well, she had the chops and then some. To close out the concert, she cut loose with a Paganini caprice.

Everyone was excited and happy, Val was beaming. She had beverages and dessert ready. We all moved to the dining room for dessert. Rustic lighting and candles cast an ethereal glow. There was a heartfelt comradery, the dessert was even nicer than the dinner. Val handled the service, while I relaxed and enjoyed the moment.

The conversations were about music. Mark mentioned Tony's wedding, someone asked us to play the Vivaldi. I looked at Val to get on the same page. Some of our guests were ready to leave, church in the morning or they were tired. She helped them prepare with hugs and best wishes. I walked Al and Nancy to their car, asking if they enjoyed the evening. They were glowing, we said heartfelt

goodbyes.

The guests that remained were chatting at the table. We worked out sleeping arrangements, Mark and his date slept in his van. They were all cannabis literate. We passed a few reefers and opened some mead. Val and I were smiling at each other and holding hands.
I went upstairs to wake Shakti. Then Mark and I played the "Winter" concerto, from the "Four Seasons". His date was a club singer, I moved to the piano and we backed her on a few songs. By then we were all zonked.
I had breakfast ready in the morning. We all had a good time, then said our goodbyes. I asked Val, "So what do you think about all of that?" She smiled and gave me a kiss. Something interesting about the dinners, they led to invitations. We spent many wonderful nights, socializing with friends at varied soirees.

It was great Val came on business trips, they were like paid vacations. Some involved giving classes at training seminars. Sometimes she sat in the back to distract me. Sending provocative messages about what we should do in bed, or flirting with a hapless victim. When I saw through one thing she thought of something else, it was so much fun.
We went shopping and sightseeing, or visited zoos and aquariums. Then tried out interesting restaurants. California was filled with alternative menu bistros. I always got new ideas to try in the kitchen.
We decided to stay on the beach, it was fun splashing in the ocean again. Val liked it too, we did that again whenever possible. I showed her where I lived, that brought back memories. I went from tolerating the road trips to loving them, thanks to her companionship.

Most of our vacations centered around hiking and camping. We liked the Rockies, from the Organ Mountains in New Mexico to the Brooks Range in Alaska. We rode trains when we could, enjoying the natural splendor of the United States and Canada.
We went on vision quests, attended spiritual retreats and fasted in sweat lodges. We liked camping in the desert, interesting things happen at night. We slipped off to the lakes now and then, that was always fun.

When Val decided to dig deeper into yoga. We used our next California trip to scour the book stores. We picked up things from other disciplines, qigong, kriya, chakras, taichi, pranayama, the Patanjali sutras, shakti, energy meridians and other nice bedtime stories. As we packed them to ship home I suggested, "It might be easier just to build a toboggan run. I would be glad to give you a good spanking." We laughed. I added, "Do you remember when I asked, if you were interested in metaphysics?" We laughed some more.

CHAPTER 25 - ASTRAL ANGEL

Visiting the higher floors gave us a new appreciation for the astral. Emotions and desires are the flavors and spices of life. They are vital to our complete self. Faced with the imperfect versions we draw away from emotions. But seeing them refined into sterling character, suggests the emotions are not the problem. They are tools to express our consciousness more fully. Comparable to musical instruments they are challenging to use well. But the final result is worth the effort.

The astral world is the perfect place to purify our emotions. There are plenty of things to learn, and unlimited ways to help. We found a region with factories, stretching off in every direction. A few workers still had physical bodies, they were spending their sleep time there for some reason. Most of them were astral residents. They could have gone and done anything, but they stayed in those dingy factories.

The ones we talked to knew they did not need money. But they got defensive, when we suggested they leave and never come back. They seemed to be self-hypnotized. We could not force the issue without violating their free will.

That got us thinking, we decided to spend time helping out in the astral. Many residents do not know their options. They only needed a nudge in the right direction. But it had to be their choice, they had to be ready and willing to change. Sometimes we got through and sometimes not. Even then, we knew we planted seeds that would sprout. If it was a man I took the lead. If it was a woman or a child, Val stepped up. We got better with experience. The successes were rewarding and made all of it worthwhile. We always learned something important about ourselves, like an unfolding course of instruction. We knew our higher selves were conducting the promenade. By helping others, we were purifying our own emotions.

After the visit to the fourth floor, we thought differently about acts of service. We were determined to complete those missing petals. We knew why some left the thought world, to be of service in the astral. That is where the real problems are at this point. There is something else. When someone has a physical body and travels in their astral form, it is different than a resident. We could usually go wherever we wanted, that is more difficult for them. From our experience it was rare, except in the upper areas. Nearly all of them are as fixed in their lives, as we are in the physical. Even more so as you descend.

We knew our mobility was valuable, so we came up with a plan. Before we went exploring, we waited for a message. If there was none, we had the night off and went in search of adventure. When there was a tug we followed it, usually it was toward the lower areas. Generally speaking, that is where people were in trouble. Something so miserable, they asked for help of their own free will. When that was done we waited for another. Most times we did a few a night, then went off for some fun. A little work and a little play to keep things balanced.

A solitary person was easier. We got pulled to a little shack, isolated in sparsely wooded hills. It was dark but not pitch black. We knew we were not too far down. We held hands looking through the wall. It was gloomy inside, there were no windows. A scruffy man was sitting at a small table. We knew he was mine. I said, "Wait here, while I see if I he will come out. Stay on your toes."

Val had her game face on, nodding her agreement. I loved that look. We could walk through walls but the residents could not. We saw their illusion for what it was, a cloud of astral mist. We also had to control our radiations. If we did not we would be painfully bright.

Making an entrance by coming through the wall was good drama, it got their attention. I could feel the wall as I passed through, like dust blowing against me. The shack was small with a low ceiling, I was barely lighting the inside. My hands were down so he did not feel threatened.

He stared at me with his mouth open, I had just appeared from nowhere.

With a serious look I said, "You asked for help and I was sent." I watched him carefully. He was right on the bubble, whether to attack or hear me out. After ten years alone he finally had enough.
I said, "If you can tell me how you got here. Maybe we can work together, to find a way out." I already knew his story by looking in his eyes. But it was good for him to talk about it, that would help start another chapter.
He told me his story. Misfortunes and desperation led him to rob a store. The store owner grabbed a pistol, our man shot him. What he did not know, the store owner shot him too. For ten years he had been hiding from the police. The astral power of his fear and guilt kept him frozen in time. A nightmare where he never woke up. We found a few that were much longer.

Many problems in the astral result from violent deaths, especially wars. They spread into the astral, then last long after the physical war ends. There is a natural process to vacating our bodies. We discharge our etheric form over several weeks. The last few days are important, because we realize we are leaving for good.
With the sudden death of a healthy person, like a soldier or an accident. Their etheric form is fully charged, when it separates from the physical. It is like an extremely powerful battery. The unseen world around a battlefield is as horrible as the physical conflict.
An impact can slam our astral bodies out. It happens fairly often, falling out of a tree gave me a taste. Because our body is intact we get yanked right back in, leaving us disoriented. A sleep cycle will realign us.
If the person was thrown out by something fatal. They cannot go back, so they go forward. The astral whisks them to their heart's desire. In his case he wanted to hide. He was in that shack, because that is what he desired more than anything. He was unprepared for life in the astral, where emotions and desires do the driving. It is subjective and there can be many layers of illusion. It is easy to get lost or shift somewhere else, right in the middle of something. There is a whole mew rule book. It is much harder to deal with than the physical world.

If the person was not accustomed to critical thinking. Sometimes they do not realize they have died. It is common with violent deaths. After the man finished his story I said, "You have left your physical body for good. Until you realize that, you are stuck in this shack."
He was listening but did not believe me.
I asked, "When was the last time you had anything to eat?"
He did not answer.
I pressed, "If you have not eaten for ten years, how could you possibly still be alive?" Then I smiled and showered him with Love.
He put his head down on the table sobbing.
I knew I had my foot in the door. Sometimes it was more difficult to connect, they could be closed tight. After a bit I said, "I know you made a bad mistake, we all have. Even though you cannot see a way out, there is one. Come on outside, we will get you going in the right direction. What do you say?"
He was still crying but nodded yes.
I opened the door, "My wife is outside, we should not make her wait any longer."
He stood and looked through the doorway, for the first time in ten years.
I said, "Come on, I need to show you something. Because we have to leave now." I went outside and he followed. He nodded respectfully when I introduced Val.
There was a mountain pass some distance away. The glow there was the brightest spot on the horizon. I pointed it out, "If you go up there, you will see a town on the other side. Go over there, they will not judge you. They have made mistakes too. What do you think? That is a steep climb, do you think you can make it up there?"
"Yes I am looking forward to it, after being in that shack for so long."

I smiled and said, "Now here is the most important part. If you meet someone on your way that you can help, do so. Soon after you will feel much better. Give it a try, you will be glad you did. If you can take them along, that is all the better for both of you."
He nodded his understanding. Then asked with a serious expression, "Are you two, angels?"
I laughed and shook my head, "No, we are just like you. We are out helping people the same way I suggested. Go on over to that town, and you will know more about everything. If you ever get lost, look around carefully. Then go to the brightest spot on the horizon."
Shaking his hand I told him sincerely, "It was good to meet you. Maybe we will meet again in better circumstances, best of luck to you." Val and I walked over a ridge until we were out of sight. Then let the tug take us to our next one. That is when she got the nickname, Astral Angel.

We were drawn to a a modern house, in a neighborhood with sidewalks and paved streets. There were utility poles without wires and vehicles that were only shells. It was not quite dark. The sky had a hazy look, a strange soot was drifting down.
We stood on the sidewalk in front of the house. It seemed fake, like a dollhouse. We held hands and looked inside. There were two people, a man and a woman. They were somewhat on the same page in life. Picking up where they left off in the astral. Val led, the wife asked for help.
The tricky part was the husband. He loved his possessions, his wife most of all. She had liked being a possession. That is what changed, it was the reason she appealed for help. As the layers of the illusion wore thin. Her spirit reminded her, she was so much more than someone's property.

We walked up the sidewalk. Val knocked on the door and the wife answered. With a fake smile she asked, "Hello, may I help you?"
Val introduced us, telling the woman we were there to help.
I saw the husband coming and knew I was up. His fake smile was even worse than his wife's. He did not want anyone talking to her, fearing he might lose control. I froze him for his own good, he was out of his league. Anything he did would have been to his own detriment.
His wife was afraid of him, but also tired of the charade. Our spirits cut through everything, the illusions fall away.
Val talked to her and won her over. She had a real talent, I learned many of my tactics from her. She was the leader in all of this. We talked about everything, and were usually on the same page. If not I deferred to her, she had great instincts about those dramas.
Val asked the wife, "Is there anyone you know, that you loved and trusted?"
The woman thought for a moment. Her spirit helped her cut through the astral fog. She said, "Yes, my grandmother."
Val asked, "Have you seen her, since you have been here?"
The woman looked thoughtful, "No, this is the first time I have thought about her. I do not understand why, because I loved her very much."
Val and I smiled at each other. I centered myself and contacted the grandmother, she lived on the third floor. Soon after a ball of brilliant light appeared in the sky. A vibrant young woman joined us, Val explained the predicament.
Grandmother thanked us for calling her. Then enfolded the wife in her starlike aura. They both rose into the sky and disappeared. Val and I looked at each other, smiling and shaking our heads in wonder. She was going Home, it did not get any better than that.
The husband was watching and listening, things were changing in him too. That was a supernatural event to him, a divine intervention. His convictions were shaken. Making sure Val was ready to go, I unfroze him. We left and went off for some fun.

The deeper areas complicated things, there were no rules or social decorum. It was a complete free-for-all. One trip down there was plenty for a while. At first I did not want Val going to the lower areas. Being protective of her fine sensibilities. As it turned out, she handled it better than me. She was a bit

of a thrill seeker, the lower you go the wilder it gets. I liked her rough and ready side. She was an old soul and had it all on tap. We had done plenty of soldiering together. Fighting for our lives with our backs against each other. During all of those rescues she never flinched. My teeth were chattering on more than one occasion.
Nightmares are reality for those in the lower astral. They wake up there and it never ends. Everything gets worse with time, because it is wearing them down.

After a while we could tell where we were headed. Sometimes there were a few details. We got one that was deep for us. Those from higher up went further. But even they had a difficult time in the deepest places.
I said, "If you do not want to go, I understand. I want to take this one, because we were related in the past. You know how hard it is to get through, down that far. That might give me a connection. Do you want to sit this one out? We could go our separate ways for the rest of the night."
She was shaking her head, "No, I want to come along and watch your back." We let the tug pull us away.
We ended up in a rundown little village, it was oppressively dark. The only signs of nature were skeletons of long dead trees. All of the buildings were derelict, some had collapsed. There were piles of debris everywhere. The whole place smelled awful, a foul odor of ancient decay. The streets were empty, but we knew we were being watched from every direction. It was tense and we were on our toes.
We got to the right house and looked inside. There were several men downstairs in the living room. They had all become grotesque. Over time their distorted emotions had altered their features. All of them were horrible versions of how they once looked. They were sitting in chairs, drinking and squabbling. Their astral liquor only made them crave more. That did not stop them from trying, all night every night.
Upstairs was an old woman in a bedroom, she asked for help. She was still making her living, the way she did when she was alive. Even though that was as disappointing as everything else down there.

Val and I talked it over, keeping watch all around. They would jump us if they could. If it came to a conflict, their astral bodies could be permanently injured by us. They could also injure us, it would not be permanent but it still hurt.
We decided to get rid of the clients. I pointed to one, "He will attack first, if we take him out the others will scatter. I will freeze the others and you take care of him. Then I will go talk to her while you keep watch. If I can get through, we will fly her to the mission."
We were on the same page, climbing up on the porch. Most of the flooring was broken or missing. We looked at each other and nodded, then went right through the front door.
When the men saw Val, they all wanted to assault her. I froze everyone except the ringleader. He pulled out a hunting knife and started threatening. Val made it red hot so he dropped it. As he lunged she caused him to trip. Then threw him out a window so hard, he smashed against a house across the street. We knew he would recover, but we would be long gone by then.
I pointed to the door and unfroze the others. They scrambled out of the house and scattered. I climbed the broken stairs carefully, in that dismal hovel of a house. Val was wild-eyed, staying downstairs to keep watch. I felt sorry for anyone who crossed her.

When I opened the bedroom door, the woman was sitting at a vanity with her head down. There was a filthy broken down bed, the drawer was missing from the nightstand. Her vitality was low, I centered myself and showered her with Love. I also lit the room a tiny bit, as bright as she could stand.
Noticing the change in lighting she lifted her head. Seeing me in the broken mirror, she turned to look with an awful attempt at a seductive smile. Whatever beauty she might have had was long gone. Her years in the lower astral had taken their toll, she barely looked human.

I said, "You made a sincere request for help. I was sent because we were related in the past. That is so important to me, I wanted to come and help you." She was incoherent so I looked in her eyes, what a pitiful story.

She had been a happily married wife and mother. When her children were grown she got bored. She met another man and started an affair. Her husband found out, so they went their separate ways. Her lover was not interested in anything serious, that was over too. Her pride kept her from taking the unskilled service jobs available. So she turned to the oldest profession.
That is not what landed her in that deep dark place. Where she made her big mistake was dabbling in black magic. She learned to manipulate the weak minded, but that was a downward spiral. Instead of admitting her mistake, she took things even further. Despite all of that, she started out higher in the astral. They way she sank so low, was using her black magic on the living. She got away with it for a while, siphoning physical vitality and sensations. That was a fool's game, in time it all came back multiplied. She sank to the depths where we found her.

It was helpful she was drained because she was passive. After telling her to follow me, I left the room and started down the stairs. When she saw Val she froze. I told her, "She is here to help me take you away. We will be leaving and you will not be coming back. There is a nice place we are going. They will help you find your way to a better life. Are you ready?"
She nodded yes, I helped her down the crumbling stairs. We all went out in the street. Residents were seen in menacing groups, shuffling toward us. They would have killed us given half a chance. We still felt sorry for them. A long series of bad decisions led them to that place. But there are always two sides to everything. Sometimes they progressed quickly once they got turned around, like they were a clean slate.
If the residents wanted a show, no problem. While Val protected the woman. I stopped shielding my radiations a tiny bit, as bright as a small candle. That was painfully bright to them, they retreated into the buildings. I ground the woman's house to dust. If I did not, she would have an irresistible urge to return. That had another positive effect. She knew she could not go back, so she put her energy into going forward.

We lifted her into the air, Val on one side with me on the other. There was no plant life in that region. Just dark forbidding places, with sheer cliffs and deep canyons. We carried her from those nightmare depths to a mission. It was run by an organized rescue group from the upper floors. A rehabilitation sanctuary for the spiritually infirm.
The volunteers were the definition of saintly. It took unfathomable patience and Love, to help someone like our rescue recover her humanity. Nothing is ever certain, their wards often return to their familiar surroundings. It is their free will to do so.
There was a beacon to make the mission easier to find. It reminded us of a coastal lighthouse. It was the only source of Love in that region. The mission was built like a fortress, they always had lookouts posted. There are many of those missions. The residents attack occasionally and sometimes succeed. The danger is real, the accounts are not pleasant.
They saw us approach, opening the massive door. We were welcomed graciously and they took charge of my unfortunate relative. We told her we loved her and would see her again. They helped her to her own room, where she could begin her recovery. After so long her nightmare was finally over.

The mission had intrepid rescue teams. But they rarely saw freelancers down that far. They understood, when I mentioned the past life relative connection. We decided to spend the rest of our time there, trading experiences and knowledge. We had the comradery that comes from a shared difficult task. It helped us put the night in perspective.
We went from there to our warm cozy bed at the Villa, what a contrast. Still amped we went

downstairs. Sitting at the table, sipping cocoa and talking about everything. Another one we would not soon forget.

CHAPTER 26 - THE YOGA MONSTER

Near the end of summer in our first full year at the Villa, it was a clear moonless night. We were sitting outside chatting, watching for meteors and spacecraft. Entertaining had become a shared passion, we were always trying to raise the bar. I suggested a costume dinner around Halloween.
Val smiled, "I like that idea, I'll start thinking about the decorations."
"I'll start working on some menu ideas."
"Now we have to decide on some costumes."
I asked, "Do you have any ideas?"
"There's a costume shop in the city, we could go there for inspiration."
We watched the stars. After a while I started laughing, "Should we dress as each other?"
Val thought about that, then said with a smile, "Yes." After a moment she asked, "Should we choose each other's costumes?"
I thought about that then shook my head, "No, this is serious business. I'm going to be such a perfect Valerie, everyone will think you've been imitating me."
She laughed, "I guess I've got my work cut out for me." After a while she wondered, "What can we do to make the dinner special?"
"That's a good question, let's be thinking about that."

The big night finally arrived, the decorations were perfect inside and out. We carved a dozen pumpkins, there were corn shocks, scarecrows and other props to set the mood. We looked through our recipe books, finding plenty of Halloween appetizers and desserts. To make the party special we tried something new. For the week before, we meditated together twice a day. Charging the Villa with Love and uplifting thoughts. As the guests arrived I raised their vibrations, by looking in their eyes or a touch. That thinned the veil, making the dinners fertile settings for personal growth.

That morning I went to a hair salon. Showing her pictures of Val and laying out the plan. She did a nice job, coloring and styling my hair to match. That caused a definite stir at the salon. I stopped at the grocery, a cashier friend was looking and wondering. I filled her in, promising an update.
As I brought in the groceries Val came downstairs. Her eyes got big and she started laughing. Giving me a hug and a kiss, "So that's what took so long."
Imitating her I said sweetly, "Be careful, or you'll mess up my hair." We laughed and went our separate ways to dress.
Val's style had changed from the rural lifestyle and yoga. I went to the city to find a dress, one I thought she would choose. I wanted the villa look, simple and a little seductive. I found the perfect one in a consignment shop, it was cut a bit low. I was still in my work clothes. The clerk watched as I held the dress in front of a mirror. She raised her eyebrows when I asked for the dressing room key.
I did not tell her about the party. But I did tell the truth, "I just love this dress and I can't wait to wear it. But I'll have to find just the right bra, because of the neckline."

Val used very little makeup so that was easy. I admired the hairstyle in the mirror, pulling up hose and clipping them to a garter belt. My goal was to dress exactly like she would, if it was not a costume party.
Something she did not know. I had practiced my Valerie, ever since we agreed to that misadventure. I worked on her voice while driving to work. Her walk and gestures, out in my yoga den with the big mirror.
Now it was time to put the pieces together. I knew of several past lives as a woman. One in particular was a good reflection of Val. I gazed into my eyes in the mirror, remembering how she felt. Relaxing my grip on myself, overlaying Val's personality. It worked better than I hoped.
We met in the great room. Val wore coveralls and boots, with a sun faded work shirt and ball cap.

Her hair was a ponytail tucked in her shirt. I loved her costume and told her so. She made me turn for a look, "I love that dress, where did you find it?" We went to the hall mirror, it was a wonderful moment. We hugged and told each other, "I love you."
When the doorbell rang I opened the door, "Wow, you both look wonderful!" It was Al as a football player, with Nancy as a pirate. They came to the dinners early to help with last minute things.
Once they were inside, Val looked at me with raised eyebrows. But it did not work, I was her for the night. Even she was not going to break my stride. Following my lead she got into character, that set the tone for the party. Everyone relaxed into that fun Halloween spirit. The hard cider might have helped.
As I worked in the kitchen. A country music star came in to sit on a stool and chat. She kept trying to trick me, seeing if she could get me out of character. The more she tried, the more I dug my Val claws in. She went to find Nancy, who put my Val to the test. But I was not pretending, I was her. I gave Nancy a Val hug and shooed them out of the kitchen.
Serving was the best part. Getting everything done quickly with no time to think. Having sparkling Valerie conversation with assorted guests. The most fun was serving Val. I gave her a smoldering, come hither look. It worked, she was mine like a puppy on a string. I smiled to myself, after all that time I still had it.
As the meal finished I cleared the table, preparing coffee, tea and mulled cider. The desserts were on a serving cart. I added the beverages and placed it near the table. Encouraging everyone to help themselves. While they did Val and I held hands, smiling and looking in each others eyes.

The next morning I sorted out the kitchen. Right on cue Val came wandering in. I set her up with tea asking, "Do you want to cook breakfast, I'll do the dishes."
She brightened, "Yes, that sounds good."
"There are muffins in the oven, what do you want to cook? I'll prep things while you wake up."
"I think scrambled eggs and hash browns." Starting to come alive she said, "That was a lot of fun last night, you did a good job being me."
I winked, "We should wear those costumes again sometime, it might be a lot of fun." She winked back and sipped her tea.

After parties Al and Nancy slept in the guest room. Al liked strong coffee, the aroma drifted down the hall. It was not long before they were stirring. The table was set, I poured their motivation as they came in. Val brought the food and everyone dug in.
Chatting about the party I protested, "I know I don't say, 'You're good to go,' that often." We all laughed.
Nancy told me, "You were kind of scary as Val last night. We thought you might be possessed or something."
I smiled, "I believe I was possessed at that. I let her do the driving for a while, it was a very interesting experience. And I did learn something important. Whoever invented underwire bras, should get a smack." We had another good laugh.
The party was a hit, we decided to do it every year. As soon as one was over we started planning another. Having decided on a Roman general for the next, I was already practicing my sneering countenance. Val would be well advised to tread lightly. I would not hesitate to throw her to the lions.

After breakfast Al and I inspected our latest construction projects, discussing topics of shared interest. We became close friends over the years. Fairly often they came over in the morning then stayed the night. Al and I spent the day working, he liked the Villa and the satisfaction of outdoor work. He also enjoyed operating the tractor and mower, there was plenty of that in summer. He was an exceptional mechanic, helping out many times.
Nothing builds an appetite like outdoor labor. The sisters always had our backs with a nice dinner. Later we all went down to the pub, having a beer or a mug of cider. Shooting pool, throwing darts or

playing cards. It was cool in the summer and warm in the winter.
The pub was always handy during dinner parties, the pool table witnessed many duels. Dart tournaments were popular, no quarter was asked or given. Cherish every minute, because there is nothing like good friends.

Val devoured everything we found on yoga, taking it up a few notches. Perfecting the poses and testing the water on other things. She brought my game up too with her focus and motivation. Her and her sister were inseparable pals. Nancy watched her yoga makeover with interest. As we ate dinner one night Val said, "Nancy wants to start doing yoga."
I gave her a big smile, "That's good news, how did that happen?"
"It was probably from watching me. What do you think I should tell her, to help her get started."
"The always trusty, baby steps and social implications. She will change and Al won't. That's something you didn't have to deal with. If one person in a relationship changes in fundamental ways, but the other doesn't. It could lead to problems. Because compatibility is based on priorities, and her priorities will definitely change. In my opinion that will be the thing to watch for. Let's go smoke a bowl by the pond and mejitate on the subject."

We left the dishes and sat on the deck. As always the stars guided me. I broke our reverie, "Love."
Val gave me a questioning look. I added, "The way for Al to accept the changes in Nancy is Love. I'm not sure about the details, but I think that's a good place to start." Val talked to Nancy about everything, we all decided to send Love to Al.
A week later Val was smiling when I got home.
I asked, "You look as happy as a Cheshire cat, what happened?"
"You are not going to believe it."
"Wait don't tell me yet, let me get a shower then we'll discuss it properly."
It was sprinkling outside, we had a puff in the vestibule then settled on the couch. I said, "Alright tell me the news, what happened?"
Val was smiling, "Last night Al smoked some weed with Nancy."
"That is interesting, tell me everything."
"His war injury was bothering him. Nancy told him to try it, before he went to the doctor for pain pills."
"Did she say how it turned out, did he get some relief?"
"She gave him the sedative kind. It helped with the pain and he got back to sleep."
Al was a paratrooper in World War Two, a bullet ended his participation. After he recovered he became a machinist. Every manufacturing plant was running full-tilt back then. A short time after that Al was smoking recreationally. There were never any issues about Nancy and yoga. Al never felt the call, but he fully supported his wife's personal evolution.

Nancy was the first of many Val introduced to yoga. A few months later she started a weekly class, for a mixed bag of friends. We rearranged the great room on Sunday mornings. If it was cold I lit the fireplace, then went to the kitchen to start lunch. When the weather was nice they used the deck by the pond. It was secluded and peaceful, surrounded by flower beds and water gardens. The sprays from the fountain helped with their rainbow mist. The natural beauty of the setting made it a good place for yoga.
After the class the extra bathroom was handy. They all got showers twice as fast. Then I was up, my contribution was a healthy lunch. Our organic produce came in handy. After salads and crudites, I served my latest vegetarian entrees for an appreciative group. Another dream come true. Fruit bowls and healthy confections rounded out the lunch.
Occasionally I joined in class discussions, but Val was the only one who knew my personal history. I took a light abstract approach. Asking questions, mixing things up and bending the rules now and then. To balance Val's practical and steady, benevolent teacher approach. Sometimes a splash is good to shake things up. I also contributed my energy to hers, which she gave in abundance to the

students.
They were by far, the most positive people we knew. I am not sure who got more from the classes, them or us. After everyone left one day I asked, "Do you remember when I was worried, about you being lonely out here?" We laughed and hugged.

Val flourished at the Villa, deciding to follow her heart with abandon. As always I kept her company on the safari. Within a few years she reclaimed her esoteric knowledge. Me being the teacher was fun while it lasted. I did light the fuse though and I felt good about that.
When I say yoga, I mean as far as each student was prepared to go. A few became suns in their own universes. Who said there are no gurus in the West? They were looking for a swami with a beard and a robe. They should have looked at the woman behind them at the grocery, wearing jeans and sneakers. She changed many lives for the better, along with the countless ripple effects. More Love in the world to be sure.

For a birthday I gave her everything needed for oil painting. Including a big stack of books. She took off like a rocket. Within a year she had her own style, ethereal impressionism is a good description. Using ordinary oil paints her works appeared self-lit. The interesting part, the lighting changed as your view shifted. She liked landscapes, gardens and still lifes.
I talked her into displaying at an art show. She won the blue ribbon for a landscape. The award included an exhibition at a local gallery. It was well received, she was welcomed into the club. She sold numerous paintings, a few were acquired by museums for substantial sums. I was so proud of her, I could not wait to see each new work.
The gallery owner called, some people wanted to speak with Val. She invited them over for dinner. I took care of the food and stayed in the background. After we ate, Val showed them around outside while the sun set. They liked the Villa. As we walked they asked where she studied art. Who had influenced her, if she had taken masterclasses.
My turn to bug her. I sent, "Go ahead and tell them, you just make it up as you go. And remember to give the kundalini talk, Saint Snookums."
She looked at me, smiling and shaking her head.

We went back to the house and gave them a tour. They were interested in her studio, anticipating works in progress and others finished. No, just an easel and the latest one. Realizing she was a natural prodigy, they were excited but kept their poker faces.
We got comfortable in the great room. They owned a gallery in New York City and liked Val's work. They wanted her to move up to the fast track, making their pitch.
Val was courteous, telling them she wanted to think about it.
They did not know how to take that. Money and fame, what is there to think about?
Val called them the next day with a, "Thank you, but no thank you." What they did not know, she sent the money from her paintings to the monastery fund. Something about Love and money not mixing. She was dancing down an inner path by then. Of course I was skipping merrily behind.
Shortly after that she bowed out gracefully from the art scene, then gave her paintings away. Each one had an uplifting spiritual quality. She had supernatural abilities, without intention the paintings were special. I knew there was something different right off, one was faintly glowing in the dark. I looked at it with astral vision. They were all portals to channel Love. I suspect they are still doing so.

Toward the end of our first full year at the Villa. The second holiday dinner was in the works. By then we were confident hosting a party. The kitchen was dialed in, the pantry was stocked. We had three chest freezers in the basement and a full root cellar. The wine racks held an interesting assortment of potions.
Val planned everything. I was the worker bee and she was the hostess with the mostest. We were a well-oiled machine. There was no fooling around about raising the vibrations. As we charged the

atmosphere the morning of the party. We left our bodies without intention.
Val laughed, "I hope we didn't overdo it."

She wanted a buffet style dinner, opting for seafood and chicken entrees. There was also a selection of vegetable dishes and homemade breads. We decided on ten guests, for an even dozen at the table. Val coordinated the schedule, the hardest part of all. We had everyone come early to mingle before we ate. They were all cannabis friendly. On the sideboard with the beverages, was a box of machine rolled reefers.
I got serious in the kitchen while Val kept everyone happy. Al and Nancy came in to sit on stools and chat. He lit a reefer and passed it to me, that alone made the night worthwhile. Val helped fill the buffet tables, then moved everyone to the dining room. We all held hands for a blessing.
Val showed them to the buffet and got the dinner started. After everyone had everything they wanted, I got a plate and joined them. Holiday revelry ensued. As we dined, Mark and his date were making googoo eyes across the table. It looked serious this time. Val looked at me smiling and sent, "That is sweet."
When everyone finished, Val showed them to the great room. I cleared the buffet tables, resetting one with desserts. There was coffee and tea, Val told everyone to help themselves.
She asked me to play piano while she kept an eye on the kitchen. I did holiday music, lounge style improvisations. Everyone was chatting and having a good time. A couple came to watch me play. I showed them Christmas songbooks asking, "What do you want to sing?" We sang a few carols, others joined in.

I had been playing Shakti on the balcony, she filled the great room nicely. I knew the acoustic sweet spot and the timing of the echoes. There is something interesting about a flute. There is no restriction to the air flow, like brass and reed instruments. Anything that involves controlled breathing affects our energy systems. Playing the flute always wound me up.
Val mentioned my practicing, I was asked to play. After warming up at the far end of our bedroom, I came out on the balcony. There was a polite hush of expectation. You can never go wrong with Bach on a solo instrument. I played solo arrangements of the Polonaise and the Badinerie from the Second Orchestral Suite, a classic flute combo.
Just before I began there was a tug, a window of opportunity was open. It was Christmas so anything goes, I focused and cranked up the dial. The house was so charged the physical part disappeared, all I saw were sparkling rays of light. I looked at Val and everyone else, they were all radiant beings. We wanted everyone to have a spiritual experience, the door was open.
I started with the Polonaise, the notes echoed throughout the room. I kept building the intensity until time slowed. The best I could tell everyone was in a trance. They were all watching Shakti, glittering light was flowing from her.

I knew I should step aside and did so immediately. From above and behind I watched myself play. The resonance was supernatural. Shakti was not silver and her keys were gone. She looked like a bamboo flute made from sparkling diamond, her tone was celestial.
Persistent streams of colored light flowed out, as I swept her across the room. Creating a swirling cloud of sparkling colors. A seven-point, gold filigree star appeared. Then more that were interlaced, forming an intricate dimensional pattern. It danced around the upper part of the room. Others formed and joined the procession.
I went straight to the Badinerie. The exquisite patterns of light filled the room, dancing and reflecting the music. I was entranced by their beauty. The last note rang forever, then I was back in my body. The patterns of light were fading.

I kissed Shakti and returned her to her case. Then sauntered down the stairs nonchalantly. Everyone came back gradually. Looking at each other, wondering if they were the only one. Some were thinking

they might have smoked or drank too much.

Val was looking straight into my soul. I sat beside her and took her hands, kissing each finger, "I love you." She was back when I got done. I gave her a wink and she smiled. We resumed our roles as host and hostess.

There was a reverent atmosphere as everyone prepared to leave. We wished each one a heartfelt, "Merry Christmas." After the door closed for the last time. Val did not say anything, she gave me a long hug.

Al and Nancy stayed the night, she kept looking at me after the party. When Al went to bed I was working in the kitchen. Nancy came in to sit on a stool asking, "Who are you?"

I joked, "Your sister's husband?" Feeling she was unsettled I said, "I don't know what you're asking, or I would answer the best I can."

"Something weird happened when you were playing the flute."

"What?"

She paused then said, "I had a strange experience. Everything was glowing and I felt like I was outside myself. I wondered if I was dreaming, because the whole room was filled with rainbows."

I sat beside her on a stool. Telling her sincerely, "Val and I want these dinners to be more than just food and chitchat. The idea is to encourage personal revelations. Believe it or not, that was our real Christmas present to you.

Do you remember how I sent energy to your hands? We did that to the whole house, twice a day for a week. I gave it another good blast just before I started playing. Then the music pushed everything over the top.

That's why you were seeing things, that are usually beyond our perception. We all glow, all of the time. You were just sped up a little more than usual. That's why those things happened. Val and I were practicing Love like we talked about. You were given a rare flower. You can either squeeze it or let it grow. If you let it grow, you'll be very glad you did. Make Val spill the beans when you get a chance."

Nancy nodded, giving me a big smile. We hugged and wished each other, "Merry Christmas."

CHAPTER 27 - OUR OTHER HOME

We wanted to go together to see our home on the third floor. Eventually the stars lined up, we made it to the bench on the lookout point. There were many things of interest but our home came first. We looked at it carefully then at each other.

The estate sprawled down a hillside, there we reflections of water. It was wooded with meadows scattered around. The terrain above was a rugged wilderness area. There was a glittering rainbow cliff marking the upper boundary. We decided to go there for a better view.

From the cliff we saw a large spring below. There was enough water flowing to create a woodland creek, it disappeared into thick woods. We looked down the face of the cliff. There were piles of stone at the bottom, large slabs of colored crystals. I pointed, "The coarsest minerals here are gemstones. Do you want to go down and look, before we see the house?"

With wide eyes and a smile she said, "Yes."

We stood by the creek just below the spring. The cliff towered above us, it was astonishing. There were sparkling layers of jade, topaz, aquamarine, sapphire and many others. We knew why it looked like a rainbow from a distance. The slabs at the bottom were enormous piles of pirate's treasure.

The spring was forty feet across, the water was crystal clear and sparkling from within. It was flowing enough to boil up in the middle. The outflow gave the impression it was alive. The creek was gorgeous, the boulders were a palette of bright colors. The water splashing over them was distinctly musical. There were precious stones in the creek, I reached in for one. It was a rough emerald the size of a softball. After we admired it I returned it to the creek bed.

The water felt pleasantly wet when I reached in. Then slid gracefully off of my arm, leaving it dry. Noticing that arm had a pleasant tingle I said, "Try this, if you want to feel something nice." Stepping into the creek and wading out knee deep. It was a mild version of the healing energy.

Val joined me, "That does feels nice." A variety of beautiful fish gathered around to investigate. We sent Love to each one and they smiled back. We were dry as we stepped out of the creek. Val pointed out a bench, well sited for viewing the spring. We looked at each other smiling, we liked benches with a nice view.

She said, "We should go see the house."

"Do you want to fly there? I would like to see where this creek goes." We learned several ways of moving around locally. One of the most common was to fly, sometimes very fast in groups. Flying people in the thought world are as common as birds here. Val and I liked to hold hands, standing up and leaning forward slightly. It was unnerving at first, but good fun after a few trips. It reminded me of surfing.

Heading in the general direction of the house, we rose to twice the height of the trees. Then higher as the creek branched. There were lakes, ponds and small waterfalls. We saw a large wetland area and several marshes. Unobtrusive walking paths provided access to the estate. The impression of distance to the house was ten miles.

We marveled at the wide variety of wildlife. Reminding us of a zoo without barriers. Some of the animals were primitive, others were unfamiliar. It was apparent there was peaceful coexistence between them.

As we neared the house we paused for a look. The structure was circular, the walls created an enclosed courtyard. Shimmering sprays shot high in the air from the center.

At long last we alighted in front of our other home. The grounds had a casual look, fading into the surrounding woods. The atmosphere was a beautiful spring day, with a chorus of birds singing. There were striking ornamental shrubs and trees, most we did not recognize. Beautiful flower beds overflowed with foliage and blooms. There were art objects scattered here and there. Four large jade

frogs provided seating by a lotus pond.
A white canary sang a happy tune from a branch. I held out a finger, inviting her for a visit. She smiled at us in turn then resumed her singing. I kissed her head and she flew back to her branch.
We turned to view the house. There were no doors or windows in the arched openings. The structure was a single piece of quartz, pastel tones shifted in a natural way. We walked up the steps holding hands. Crossing the threshold I remembered something, "You designed this house."
Val smiled, "Yes, I just realized the same thing."
"Did you catch the name? I wonder what Crystal Vortex means."
The inner wall was taller, the roof sloped up from the outside with a gentle arch. The floor was a tasteful parqueterie from exotic woods. We were in a meeting hall, there was comfortable seating and ornamental statuary. The furnishings followed the curves of the room.
There were several paintings, we took a closer look. They were amazing windows into real worlds, full of life. She asked, "How do you think these are done?"
I shook my head, "Beats me, they are really something." Then laughing, "You painted them. So when you figure out how, let me know."

There was another arched doorway across the room. Going through, we were in a portico surrounding the courtyard. The roof sloped down to a ring of columns. The house had ornamental detailing, but the overall effect was elegant simplicity.
The animals we had seen would fill a book, but this one is worth mentioning. A snow leopard was rubbing against my leg. I scratched behind her ears, her name was Meisha. After a moment she jumped onto a bench to start her bath.
The atrium was dazzling, with lush tropical flowers and exotic plants. A magnificent fountain was the centerpiece. The decorative theme was a lotus blossom, fashioned from flawless quartz. There were large colored crystals in the center, jetting water high in the air. The atmosphere above was filled with a rainbow mist. It was vitalizing the entire property.

We returned to the meeting hall then into the next room. The luminous walls and ceiling changed, from subdued to pleasantly lit. Decorative shelves held books and natural objects, unique crystal formations and other curiosities.
There were art objects made from precious stones. One was an emerald tiger, two feet long. Val admired it, after a touch she said, "You made this for me."
A beach scene inside a diamond caught my eye. It was twelve inches long, six inches wide and six high, the edges were rounded. It was so transparent it was nearly invisible. The internal scene was live action, in lifelike colors. There was a sunrise and two seagulls flying over a beach, it was breathtaking. I touched it then said, "This is a gift from a special Friend. Compared to this, making an amethyst is like making a snowball. It was fashioned molecule by molecule. It is a flawless diamond and the colors are done subatomically."
Val said, "It is beautiful, it radiates spiritual energy."
"There is more than meets the eye with that sun. It is actually stepping down energies from a higher realm."
A low round table was in the center of the room. The top was clear and six inches thick. Four upholstered benches followed the shape. I touched an edge, it was a portal.
Val looked at the books. Reaching for one, she smiled as it revealed its contents. Moving to the next she said, "Wow, that is really something."
I got a message and broke the news, "I'm sorry, but we need to get back. The next time we will come straight here and read a book."

The seven rooms of our home form a circle, each visit we started where we left off. It took four more trips to see the entire house, that took over two years. We would have gone sooner but several things had to align.

The next visit we started in the library. Val wanted to read a book, she reached out her hand.
I asked, "What is it about?"
"It has something to do with chemistry. Does 'Organic Molecular Alignment', mean anything to you?"
"Yes, I know of one type. I discovered it when I was wandering in the woods at night. There were huge spiderwebs, stretching from tree to tree. They are magical to see with astral vision. When spiders spin their silk, they cause natural molecular alignment. Spider silk is a flexible crystal, with unbelievable tensile strength. It is a supermaterial. If people could discover those secrets. A thin sheet of aluminum would be like a thick oak plank. What is the next book?"
"Quantum Alchemy."
"That sounds like my stuff, try a different shelf. I bet they are grouped by topic, find something you would like to read."

She scanned a few books, "Here is one about animals, I want to read that." She placed it on the table and we sat together on a bench.
I squeezed her hand, "This has been my dream, since I told you about the thought world library." Those books were more advanced than the others I had seen. They were thin and there were no separate pages. As she opened the book, the two covers became a single piece.
It was divided into a grid of rectangles, each showed a sequence of a type of animal. Fish, birds, mammals, reptiles and others. She liked the mammals, that page was shown. Again it was a grid of rectangles, each with a live action scene of different mammals. There were some we did not recognize. She liked the otter and the page changed. The live scene was the view from swimming in a pond.
I had a revelation, "This book is not information about animals. It will let you experience being the animal."
She looked at me smiling, "I want to try it." The page pulled us in.

We were swimming together as otters, it was so much fun. We dove underwater then came to the surface again. I loved the feelings from my whiskers and tail. I sent, "Do you want to play chase?"
She looked at me with her cute otter face, then dove out of sight. I was hot on her heels. We frolicked in the water, twisting and turning. I chased her up on the bank, following as she dove back in the pond. After a time I sent, "Do you want to try a different animal?"
She gave me an otter wink.

We were back in the library. She exclaimed, "Wow that was fun, I love this book!"
"You try another one, I want to look at this table. Maybe we can figure out how it works." As she experienced another animal. I centered myself, connecting with the table. As an experiment I thought about the last morning, I sat outside the monastery gates. The scene appeared and I understood the potential of the table.
I squeezed Val's hand. She came back from being a buffalo. Galloping flat out in a thundering herd. Her eyes were wild with excitement, it took her a moment to settle down.
I pointed to the scene on the table, "I think we can do the same thing here." I realized something, "The books are nostalgic mementos, they are keepsakes. This table is a portal to anything and everything, if we can learn how to use it. Do you want to try this scene for an experiment?"
She returned the book to the shelf saying, "This was a present from you." She smiled and joined me on the bench. We looked at each other with anticipation, then focused on the table.

I was sitting with crossed legs in front of massive temple gates. Ancient stone buildings were scattered on beautiful grounds. My whole body ached, I had been there for a week. There was a fountain nearby but I had not eaten. I was no longer hungry and the pain in my stomach was gone. There was a detached feeling, as if I was watching myself. I had stopped worrying and wondering. Smiling I thought, "Everyone in that monastery wants to be empty, I already am."

Everyone present when I arrived had given up and left. I saw an Elder approach the gate. He opened it, motioning for me to follow. I could not believe my eyes, I was so happy I started crying.
I tried to stand up. I had been sitting so long my legs were asleep. I finally stumbled through the gates. The Elder looked at me thoughtfully, then closed the gate behind us. He pointed to a door in one of the buildings, indicating I should go there. Then he went off in a different direction. As he disappeared around a corner, I was back in the library.

I asked, "What happened with you?"
"I opened the gate so you could enter, you were so little then."
"I bet we can see all of our lives, and anything else for that matter." I had a flash, "We sat at this table planning our current lives. I am sure glad I found you, or you would never have let me forget." We laughed and hugged.
I asked, "Do you want to try something different?"
She smiled.
"What about seeing how that fountain was built?" A scene appeared. We were building the house, it was done but the courtyard was empty. Val and I looked at each other, then dove into the scene.

We were in the courtyard, both of us concentrating intently. Glowing lines were forming in the air, the basic shape of the fountain. We kept at it, resolving the details. Rendering a dimensional outline with persistent lines of light. When we finished I looked it over carefully, this was my design. After correcting a few things I was satisfied.
Then we started filling it in. I was precipitating the third floor's version of solid matter. It reminded me of shoveling concrete into a form. The basic material was pure quartz and I was going at it.
As I filled the form, Val placed exotic crystals in the bottom and sides. She was working even harder than me, creating precise intricate patterns. We finally finished, then touched up things until we were happy. The fountain was still glowing but we knew it would solidify.
The crystal pumps were made by a friend who specialized in them. There were bores down their centers, lined with thousands of paper thin rings. They were made from various exotic materials. Their interaction produced a linear accelerator.
The water source was the spring by the cliff, we built it in that crystal outcropping for a reason. The spring was similar to the pumps. There were rings of quartz slabs forming a well. A Friend established the energy channel from above. The water was charged with universal forces, the vitalizing aspects could be extracted.
There was a beaver dam and reservoir up the hill from the house. That allowed us to redirect the water, there were many fountains and decorative ponds. The last thing was installing two control panels, one by each atrium doorway. We stopped and looked at each other.

Back on the bench I asked, "Do you want to go see that control panel?" We did not notice it before, being entranced by the flowers and fountain. The panel was artistically designed, there were many adjustments. The crystal pumps were sophisticated, refining different types of vital energies. We did not need it but the plants and animals did. They could not stay there without it. It was like overwintering tropicals in an energetic greenhouse.
It did something else important, by keeping our radiations confined. Consideration is paramount, we did not want a concert or fireworks to disturb others. The pumps could also produce pleasing tones, the wind, pan pipes, a cathedral organ and others.
The crystal circuitry Val created in the fountain, provided an array of colored effects. In the material of the fountain, in the water and into the sky above. There was also crystal circuitry in the house. The walls could be any color desired, with other effects such as holiday lighting. As we enjoyed the scene my body called, time to leave. I broke the news, shortly we were home in bed.

The next time we went straight to the table. We had discussed it already, each considering a few

things. Val wanted something from a shared past life. Two faces appeared, us in our last life together. We looked at them carefully, then at each other smiling. The faces changed, she was paging back through them. They were becoming more primitive. I would not have gone back so far. She stopped on a pair of young teens. Somewhere between neanderthal and modern humans, toward the early side. Val gave me a questioning look, I smiled and nodded. As it turned out the joke was on me.

We were in a round mud hut, mud covered branches formed the roof. There was a hole in the center for smoke to escape. Animals skins were on the ground, a fire was smoldering. There was a pile of gourds and several crude weapons. Our clothes were roughly made from skins.
I was sitting on a pelt in distress. I was the girl, about to have our first baby. Val was my other, with a face only a cave girl could love. He was tall, well over seven feet. A few years older, he had massive arms and shoulders. I liked them when I first saw him. Sometimes he was gentle, that was rare. I had never experienced that before. We were lonely without each other.

He was fidgeting nervously, going out the opening then returning. Watching me and shaking his head. I knew the time was near. I went outside, then up a hill into the bushes. My other was watching closely from in front of the hut.
I had seen this many times since I could hardly walk. Now it was my turn. Ow that hurt, as the contractions came in waves. It was over quickly. I had the baby, then bit through the cord. Licking it clean as I returned to the hut. The whole time staring at my baby and holding it with the utmost care.
My other was excited and happy. He came over and touched the baby gently. Then he touched me, looking deeply into my eyes. Time stopped. There was a beautiful flash of light, like a glimpse into eternity.

We were back in the library. I laughed and said, "Yuck, I can still taste the baby. You did that on purpose."
Val was shocked then started laughing, "That was really something. Now I see why you warned me about past lives."
"From my experience, that was a good one for back then. Your strongest memory was Love. That is as good as it gets, even today. You rang the bell. I was expecting a skirmish with another tribe, one that did not end well."
After we stopped laughing it was my turn, "I know I had something else planned. But now I want to see how we met, and became a pair. What do you think, it will be even further back?"
Val laughed and said, "No guts, no glory."
We paged back through the pairs to the first, looking at them amazed. Those two had a long way to go until neanderthal.
We were at least fifteen feet tall, our skin was light blue. We had large pointed heads, with small openings for our mouths and noses. Our eyes were small and close-set. I started laughing from Val's expression. Asking, "They are from the early part of the third era on Kumarika. There could be dinosaurs involved, do you still want to try them?"
With excitement she said, "Yes!" We dove into the scene.

I was morose and exhausted, having wandered out into a mud flat picking berries. I was stuck and could not move, it had been two days. The only thing going on in my head was emotions. They swung wildly in every direction. I had good astral vision and poor gray physical vision. My fingers were stubs, the feelings from my body were faint and basic. My arm and leg bones were slightly flexible.
Several predators were eyeing me from the edge of the mud. They were more intelligent, remaining on solid ground. I saw something move in the trees, one of my own kind. They had no hair, clothes or visible reproductive organs. They spotted me and came closer for a better look. The predators spotted them, bounding and snarling in their direction.
While receiving several bites, they bravely scattered the carnivores using a heavy branch. One was

killed when it's skull was smashed. Another flew out in the mud, becoming stuck as well. My new friend looked at me, then exhaled sharply. I did the same. They turned and disappeared, I was despondent. After a time they returned carrying a dead tree, I was joyous. They dropped it on the mud toward me, a branch was within reach.

I gradually pulled myself free until I was lying on the log. Then finally crawled to safety. Lying flat out on the ground covered with mud, exhausted and panting.
My new friend stood over me, exhaling sharply. Gesturing toward the mud and sending, "Bad!"
I looked at the mud then at my friend, a light flickered in my head. A new feeling surfaced, pleasant but strange. It was several feelings at once, I could not process it.
They picked a handful of berries then gave them to me. I sat up and began eating with murmurs of enjoyment. My savior was glowing brightly and looking at me intently. I looked in their eyes, there was a flash of sparkling light. I was ecstatic.

We were back in the library. After being astonished we laughed and hugged. I said, "That was an interesting first date. I wonder if we were even boys or girls yet. I thought meeting in a blizzard was fun, I stand corrected. Did those dinosaur bites hurt?"
"Not as much as I expected, more like a dull ache." We laughed some more.
I said, "You asked if we were animals once. Those dinosaurs were smarter than me, and that was on this planet. Not billions of years ago, probably in the tens of millions."

Val was up to bat, she wanted to experience animals using the table. We ended up as golden eagles, soaring over foothills and grasslands. It was breathtaking. The animal book was basic in comparison, this was the real deal.
With a gnawing hunger after roosting all night, we were hunting for prairie dogs. We hated those stupid overgrown rats. They could not even fly, even gnats can fly. Other than being delicious, they only had one good quality. That squeal they made when we snagged one. That was the best sound in the world. They thought they were better than us, because their little ones were born alive. We though that was disgusting. No wonder they lived in holes like worms.
We used the updrafts to our advantage, gliding above the sun warmed slopes. The sun on our wings was worth living for. We both looked around carefully, scanning for interlopers. Those sneaky little hawks really tried our patience. There were feathers on our fingers, the slightest movement changed our flight. Flying was instinctive, the feeling was complete exhilaration. I could see for miles, and in sharp detail for two thousand feet.

It was warming up, we knew the dogs would come out to bask in the sun. There was only one chance at this. Then they would be wary and the updrafts would be gone. My other saw one off alone, diving skillfully to catch it. Carefully keeping her shadow behind her prey. She snatched it just as it noticed her. Then stopped the thrashing with a talon through it's head. Positioning it for the least wind resistance.
I knew I should not scream at the others. But I did anyway, "Get back in your holes and make some more! So we can eat them too!"
I followed as she flew to a rock ledge, high on a cliff. I wanted some, taking a step closer. She screamed, "Get you own, lazy pigeon!"
I knew there was plenty, she would be full soon enough. I decided to wait. Taking a step back, combing my wing feathers to pass the time.
She was about to take a bite, then stopped and looked at me.

We were back on the bench. My turn to laugh, "Was the prairie dog not to your liking?" We laughed and hugged.
I was curious about the table, where we got it and how it worked. An art gallery appeared, visual arts,

sculptures, furniture and other handcrafted items.
I asked, "I think we got the table there, do you want to go see?" She smiled and nodded.

Standing in the gallery was amazing. The walls were thirty feet high, covered with paintings, tapestries and other types of wall art. There was a maze of display shelves. Like a high density museum, and every piece was exquisite. Wandering around we saw things we made. A few of the paintings were Val's, some of my lawn ornaments were further on. One was a jade bench formed by opposing alligators, their heads were the arm rests. Glowing amber eyes followed us, they both smiled and showed their teeth. We wondered what I was thinking when I made that. It was no surprise no one had adopted them. They even scared us a bit, something in the eyes.
Similar items in the gallery were grouped in areas, the place was endless. There was a section with musical instruments but we were following a tug. We came to a book area, then one with a selection of portals. There was a table like ours, some large crystal balls and a few other items.
The gallery was a swap shop, a communal clearing house. On the third floor and above everyone helps each other. If it is practical, there is a fun exchange of goods or services. You help them build a house, because you enjoy the challenge and have the skills. They help you with their fields of interest, everyone always wins.

Looking at the table I said, "Well now we know where we got it, I wonder how it works." We had not seen anyone, now a distinctive young man approached.
He greeted us, "You have completed your studies. I considered a physical lesson. There are adaptation issues."
He obviously knew us. I said, "We still have physical bodies, so there are memory blocks."
He looked carefully at each of us and we knew who he was. He suggested we go to his lab, to show us how the table worked.
There was an assortment of delicate tools, small devices and a workbench. The most important thing was him, he was not native to Earth. After finishing the intelligence course early on his planet. He came here for a change of scenery. While he waited for others to finish their lessons.
The interesting thing about him, their animal phase was short compared to ours. Their emotional bodies were basic by our standards. They did not laugh and had few facial expressions. On his planet they had advanced technology. Intergalactic spacecraft, and fully automated production, transportation and services. But there was no music, art, entertainment or humor. He liked humor and planned to share it when he returned home. Hoping he could get others to like it. He was an interstellar foreign exchange student.

Our young friend brought a lot to the party. He had exceptional technical skills and specialized in exotic materials. He was assembling a table and showed us how it worked. There were two slabs of flawless quartz to form the shell. The portal was crystalline circuitry sandwiched inside. The entire device was then fused into a single piece.
He explained how the portal worked, "The 'Grid', is our reference to the universal dispersion matrix. The precursor to matter. Every occurrence is there imprinted, rendering a flawless universal memory. Time is subsequent, latency is null. A portal associates your thoughts and the Grid. Pure quartz or water could be employed, they require special skills. The discriminator is the crux of this device. They are universally accessible."

There were notebooks on a shelf. He opened one on the table, "Review the diagram." Pointing to the page he continued, "This arrangement commingles interaction, for concurrent participation. This arrangement facilitates discrimination. There are many technical Grid access strategies, this is the essence of mine. This arrangement is the nexus, a bidirectional cascaded prism array.
The device is shielded with specific materials, as assurance against localized disruptions. The energetic levels exceed your star by orders of magnitude. The design is inscribed and shielded, the

shell is fused. The internal elements are phased to plasma, for relative transparency." Showing us a tool, "Employing a phase converter."

He asked, "The description was adequate?"
I replied, "I think I got the basic idea. Thank you for taking the time."
"An inquiry?"
I smiled, nodding yes.
"Subsequent to your return, I request that you delineate the premise of music."
"Yes that would be my pleasure, I am looking forward to it. And we will tell each other jokes the whole time."
His mouth moved slightly, a big smile for him.
I added, "We will also talk about physical life on Earth, if you are still interested. Thank you again."

After a shift we were back in the library. We looked at each other with wide eyes. Marveling and shaking our heads in wonder.
She asked, "Do you think we have time for another?"
"Not a clue, we may as well try."
"You choose again."
I thought carefully then touched the edge of the table, a scene appeared. I explained, "We will not have physical bodies for this, but I thought you might like it. This is Berlin in 1833, the young man conducting the orchestra is Felix Mendelssohn. The piece was first called, 'The Lonely Island'. Then he used 'Hebrides Overture' and 'Fingal's Cave' interchangeably. Are you ready?"
With a big smile she said, "Yes."

We were hovering in astral bodies near the ceiling of a concert hall. There were thousands of us. By the magic of four dimensions we all had a good view. Val and I were holding hands, then I pulled her close to put my arm around her. The hall was dim except the gas lighting for the stage. The maestro introduced the piece. There was a moment of breathless silence when he lifted his baton.
As the first notes of the theme were heard, rainbow patterns of light formed above the stage. Dancing and evolving, becoming more intricate as the music swelled. Soon they filled the theater.
We listened and watched that glorious spectacle. One of the greatest Romantic composers, conducting his newly minted masterpiece. After watching the ovation for several minutes. We returned to the table, still hearing the final notes.
I asked, "Do you remember when we first met? That was playing while you made dinner. I never dreamed we would see him conducting it." Val's body was tugging so we headed home.

Next visit we started in the library. The table was fun but we knew it was endless. We wanted to finish exploring the house. The next room was a visual arts studio and gallery. An easel held a partially finished painting. While Val looked at that, I inspected a weaving loom. Because I knew I made it. There was a clockwork mechanism, with sequencing drums and presets. It automated things, but there was enough hands on work to be satisfying.
I built a basic version in the barn, it lived on the balcony. I dabbled in the textile arts over the years, that was Val's forte though. She eventually created all of the window dressings, rugs and bedclothes. Either on the loom or the sewing machine. She had a nice setup in the work room. Her specialty was quilts, they were beautiful and made exceptional gifts. We had a quilting frame, so friends came over to assemble theirs and socialize.

The next room was smaller than the others, a shrine and meditation space. There was no furniture. The floor was cushioned velvet, the motif was a Tibetan sand painting. Crystal wall shelves displayed spiritual mementos. Intricate mandalas were featured on the walls. Fashioned from fused gemstones and self-lit. We gazed at one, it had special properties.

There were beautiful lounging pillows, we sat near a wall admiring the room. Noticing a shimmer on the ceiling I said, "That is some kind of energy field, I wonder what it does." We sat facing each other and centered ourselves. Then touched the floor to commune with the house. We learned several interesting things. There was more to the house than readily apparent.
Crystal Vortex was a reference to the inter-dimensional features. Five dimensions allow us to make copies of ourselves. We roamed the universe from there, exploring, visiting friends and making new ones.

We also learned the ceiling was a celestial observatory. We discussed our insights, deciding to to try it. I touched the floor while holding a thought. The upper part of the room turned into the actual night sky. There was depth and the viewpoint could be changed. It was not optical, it was similar to the table.
The Milky Way was featured. After enjoying the colors and detail, I zoomed in on Mars until a pebble filled the scene. Val said, "I wonder how far we can see."
"Let's try something further out." I backed out, then focused on the Andromeda galaxy. Bringing it closer until it filled the room. After finding a planet, a pebble filled the scene. We looked at each other shaking our heads in wonder. It was time to get back.

We started from there on our next visit. The adjoining room was a tasteful private space, a bedroom without a bed. There was a doorway into the atrium opposite the meeting hall.
After that was a large workshop, with a sizable opening to the outside. Workbenches and storage systems lined the walls. There were several mechanical devices in the shop. Being designed for fabrication and use in the physical world. One was a small lightweight vehicle. There was no engine. The wheels had over sized hubs, they were compact electric motors. There were two seats on a pedestal with a cargo area behind. The only control was a lever. Tipping the seats forward, we found an array of crystal cubes. They were advanced batteries, it was an electric vehicle. There were other devices for use in the physical world. One was a handheld excavator for trenching work. The others were for agricultural use.
The other end of the shop was an artist's workroom. There were provisions for sculpture, pottery and several others. One was a form of stained glass from fused gemstones. There were several works in progress. Large bins held a wide selection of minerals and gems, most were unfamiliar.

The beautiful room after the workshop was dedicated to music. There was a performance area and seating. A number of instruments were on display. Some were from the thought world, their use was a form of meditation. I made a few of the instruments but most were from elsewhere.
After the music room, we were back in the meeting hall. Hugs were in order, we had worked on that for a long time. After communing with the house we looked for control panels. One in the meeting hall had atmospheric settings. The first thing we tried made it snow, that got our interest.
There were settings for clouds, lightning, fireworks, northern lights and many others. We started some heavy rain. The sky was dark with thunderstorms, the wind was gusting. Standing wave barriers protected the openings, there was no feeling of dampness inside. The lightning was spectacular in brilliant rainbow colors, thunder rolled off the surrounding hills.
Over the next few days we talked about everything, then made a firm decision. We would not go back again, until we both finished our current lives. Then we would walk in together, holding hands.

CHAPTER 28 - MORE FUN AT THE LAKES

When the early bulbs were blooming, in the spring of our second full year at the Villa. We were chatting at the breakfast table. I said, "Mark is thinking about proposing, he was wondering if we'd host the wedding."
"Did you talk to him about it?"
"No, he never asked. He was just wondering to himself. I picked it up because it was about me. He still hasn't decided to get married, because he wants to move to Los Angeles. He's got some wild idea, California will be a big music scene in the sixties. If he can get his foot in the door. His diversity and Classical training should keep him in studio work. He needs to talk everything over with Debbie.
If he does propose, I doubt if he'll ask us to host. He doesn't like to impose on people. I was going to offer when he tells me about the engagement. How does it all feel to you?"
"It feels right."
"Me too. How about not having a theme, we'll let Mark and Deb be the focus?"
"That sounds good, now we'll see what Mark does."

Mark proposed, they wanted to marry at sunset by the pond. Asking us to plan everything so it was a surprise. We decided on a welcoming mingler with beverages and appetizers. Then the wedding, and a casual cookout dinner for the reception. Many of the guests were Mark's popular music friends. We planned on live music in the great room after the reception.
When I was meditating that morning, I knew Mark was my good deed. Not the wedding, something special. I mentioned it to Val, she had the same feeling.
We welcomed the guests as they arrived. All of the food was prepared ahead so we could mingle. Everything worked out well, the mood was festive.
I played Handel flute arrangements at the pond. While Val brought the guests the long way around. Shakti charged the atmosphere, as everything turned out she did her usual fine job. The wedding was informal, Linda conducted the ceremony.
Mark began the ceremony playing Debbie's guitar favorite, Scarlatti's "Sonata in A". They wrote their own vows, it was a lovely timeless moment. Val and I held hands, she also took the wedding photos. That wedding was the first of many, we enjoyed them.

While everyone congratulated the newlyweds, we went to get the dinner going. A picnic style buffet under the arbor, casual and free form. Mark and Deb selected the music on the hi-fi. We had two grills going, sandwich options, casseroles, salads and desserts. There was a full complement of beverages and a box of reefers. Everyone had a good time, Mark and Deb dug it.
I made a three-tier wedding cake with cream cheese frosting. Val served that and beverages, while I bussed the dinner and tidied up.
Al and Nancy left after the reception along with a few others. It was a younger set heading for the great room. Amplified popular music was on the playbill. It was a last hurrah with the band, Mark and Debbie were moving to California.
As they setup to play I asked Mark, "Have you ever thought about making a demo tape? It might help you get studio work."
"Yes, I'm going to do that. As soon as we can save up the money."
"I've got an Ampex stereo recorder, do you want to make one right now?" Mark's eyes got big, every musician dreamed of a reel-to-reel tape recorder. They were a substantial investment. With good microphones and monitor speakers, more than a new car.
He asked, "When did you get that?"
"Recently, I got a great deal out of the want ads. It's from a music store that closed, they had a little room for making demos. The mikes and monitors are excellent, I got a whole case of tapes too. I wanted it to be a surprise, do you want to try it out?"

"Yeah."

Everything was ready, we had him miked in a few minutes. He was flawless as usual, playing Tedesco's, "Capriccio Diabolico" on electric guitar. He stunned the room. We all listened to the playback, marveling and smiling.
As Mark boxed the tape he said, "Thank you very much, that's worth it's weight in gold."
I suggested, "Why don't you borrow the recorder and everything else? Some quality time with that will give you a serious edge. You need it more than me right now. Bring it back after you buy the eight-track model. You'll be choppin' the high cotton by then. We'll have a good time remembering today."
"I couldn't do that."
"Sure you can, and you could get some folding money making demos for others. That would help you make contacts too." He got tears in his eyes and hugged us both.
The band was never better, playing to their inner circle of friends. It was a lively and heartfelt performance.

Mark and Debbie stayed the night. They were leaving the next morning, wandering across the country for their honeymoon. They planned on living in the van until they found a place. Everyone gave them cash for their wedding gifts.
After the other guests left, we played one more duet for the ladies. A flute and guitar arrangement of Debussy's, "Afternoon of a Faun". It was a musical moment, we taped it for a keepsake.
We went to the pond to chat, the night was gorgeous. The stars were brilliant, the night insects and frogs were in good voice. Debbie had a spiritual side, she commented on the natural chorus.
I mentioned the universal tone, because frogs hook me right up.
Mark asked about that.
I shared, "When the universe was created. It was done with an intonation, a celestial decree. It sustains the creation and everything is contained within it. Hundreds of monks chanting AUM is our best attempt. But frogs are closer for me, that's why I meditate out here. If you ever hear it. You'll hear all of the music that's ever been, or ever will be."
Mark asked, "Have you heard it?"
I nodded giving Val a look, she was smiling. I said, "Right now is the perfect time, all we have to do is let the frogs guide us. But if it does work, you will never be the same. You'll hear it in everything, the sound of a train, a distant lawnmower and especially natural sounds. It's a one way door, so put that in your decision."
Mark and Debbie looked at each other smiling.

We spread a blanket on the deck, then sat in a circle. Val faced me and Deb faced Mark. We joined hands to form an energy loop. I suggested, "Still your minds and breath calmly. Casually listen to the frogs." Val and I wound things up until time slowed. Then further until the astral frequencies were seen.
My frog friends already knew what we wanted. In a cooperative psychic effort, they shifted something fundamental. We all rose from of our bodies holding hands. A stupendous bell tolled, from everywhere and everything. We were immersed in the universal tone.
We wanted to bless Mark and Debbie's marriage. I had about given up, that is always when things happen. We wound it down then sat in silence for a time. I knew I was the guide, suggesting snacks and sleep.
At the table I asked Mark, "Did you hear the music?"
"Yes, it was incredible."
"It won't always work, but try to hear it when you're playing. When it does work make sure you're recording, because it will be timeless magic."

In the morning we saw them off on their adventure. I offered some jars of weed to help make friends. It always broke the ice in musical circles. I pointed out the legal risks, they were the ones out on a limb.
We stocked the van with food and supplies until it was bulging. Then waved as they drove down the lane. It reminded us of someone sailing to the New World. The day was bittersweet, Mark and I had been pals for a while. He had a paying gig a few days after they got to California, Debbie had a waitressing job.
Eventually he toured the world with assorted bands. Backing headliners as a contract musician. His name was printed on millions of albums for his session work. They ended up with their own villa in Washington State. By then he was involved in film and TV soundtracks. We did have a good time when they brought the Ampex back. They showed up in a Cadillac convertible, definitely chopping the high cotton.
A while after Mark moved, we saw him play a club in San Francisco. The opening act was a group of kids. They were so far out of tune it was painful. They made up for it with enthusiasm, connecting with the crowd. That is the bottom line. I said to Val, "I wonder what 'Jefferson Airplane' means."

Later in that second year Val asked, "What do you think about another summer concert?"
I had been considering the prospect, "I'm on board if you are. Do you want to have lunch instead of dinner?"
"Yes, that's what I was thinking too."
"Formal dining or buffet?"
She was smiling.
I asked, "You want to do a French villa style luncheon, don't you?"
She smiled more.
"Not a buffet, casual dining."
She nodded.
I laughed, "I guess your French villa pigeons, have finally come home to roost."
She laughed and squeezed my hand.
There were several shelves of cookbooks from around the world. We looked through the French ones for recipes. The pictures gave us decorating ideas. The plan was to eat under the arbor. We decided on popular music and worked up a guest list.
Val welcomed everyone while I was busy in the kitchen. We encouraged everyone to play music casually, from when they arrived. French wines were featured and there was homemade in jugs. The usual tub of iced beer, I smelled weed more than once.

The flower bed outside the kitchen window was lush with blooms and butterflies. I heard guitar in the great room. A couple was sitting under the arbor playing bluegrass. It sounded nice, wafting through the open windows.
The entrees were French standards, coq au vin, cordon bleu and others. There were vegetable dishes, garden salads and several types of bread. For dessert there were cheesecakes and a selection of French pastries.
Val helped me serve, it took longer to get things outside. Soon we were all eating and it was the best thing ever. The fresh air with the sunshine and flowers, Val was all smiles. Her dream had come true and she was well satisfied. The look she gave me, suggested I might get lucky that night.

She got everyone heading for the great room with beverages and desserts. I sorted out the meal and reset the kitchen. I knew someone would be hungry again after the concert. It was a warm afternoon so we turned on our new air conditioner. That was a novelty then outside of theaters, our guests loved it.
We drew numbers for the performance order, I was fourth. We had a sound system by then with pro mikes, it helped liven things up. After everyone was comfortable, Val got things going. First up was a

great flat-picking guitar player, he could really rip.
Next a wife sang "I'm Walkin", with her husband on piano. If your toe was not tapping, you were asleep. They did a nice job with "Misty" for an encore.
An accordion player was third, wailing on a barrel-house polka. He played some great swing for an encore.
Val introduced me next, I gave her a squeeze before I sat at the piano. I prepared one of my favorite songs, "Over the Rainbow". I interpreted the lyrics as an image of our real home in the sky. There were three parts to the arrangement. In the first I am reminiscing about Home. Then an instrumental as I proceed there. Followed by a reprise of the lyrics. I am joyous I have come over the rainbow, back to my true home.

I sang the first part with longing. Several guests were dabbing their eyes, I was on the verge myself. The instrumental started introspective moving to excitement. I sang the reprise with reverent joy, like an uptempo hymn. Remembering a morning we sat on a mountainside, with a glowing rainbow over a valley below. It was well received. I worked on it when Val was away, so it was fresh for her. I could tell she liked it, I smiled back.
I mixed it up with "Don't Be Cruel", for an encore. Thumping out the walking bass. Pushing my luck, flirting with all of the gals. I slid into home plate safe, saving the last wink for Val. She winked back and blew me a kiss.

We took a break, everyone stretched and regrouped. Val was hostess as I served desserts and beverages. Then we were ready to relax, settling in for the rest of the concert.
We heard bluegrass, from a couple who played the "Grand Ole Opry". She was on guitar and he picked banjo, they sang charming down-home harmony.
Next a singer-guitar player did "Bop-A-Lena". He got it going, everyone loved it. A soulful "Unchained Melody" was the encore, big smiles all around.
Jazz piano was up next, he wanted me to sit in on flute. We had played together a few times. We did Herbie Mann and Sam Most cuts, it was smooth.
The concert finished with gypsy guitar and violin. Django Reinhardt's "Charleston", and a Csardas Hungarian dance. A great Old World sound that captured the mood that day.
All of the performers knocked my socks off. The musical talent all around is amazing. I brought the dessert cart from the kitchen and we had a fun mixer.

The sun was setting as most of the guests said their goodbyes. We saw them off with heartfelt best wishes. There was positive feedback from the dinner, with more invitations than we could accept. In one form or another, we did the summer concert every year.
The five guests that stayed were part of an inner circle. Some of Val's yoga students, in deeper than the poses. We decided to wander around outside for a recharge. I mentioned a box of fireworks, it had rained on the Fourth of July. We thought it would be fun to enjoy them at the pond.
I always worked on etheric tricks to surprise Val, she liked them. A new one was sparks from my fingers. We had done considerable energy work on the deck, it was highly charged. As our guests lit sparklers and bottle rockets. I said, "Watch this." With my arms skyward and fingers outstretched. Sparks shot from my fingers, ten feet above my head. Their mouths were open, even Val's.
The students were curious how that was done. I gave them some concepts and things to practice. I was on a roll and suggested, "Let's sit in a circle and have some fun." After we did, Val led a vibration raising session. With seven of us there was considerable energy.
I felt a powerful force, then something shifted. I painted the night sky in brilliant colors, with persistent streams of glittering light. Animals, birds, flowers and butterflies. It was impromptu, surprising me as much as anyone. After several minutes the door closed. I put my hands in my lap and winked at Val. She smiled and winked back.
A student asked, "How can that be possible?"

I smiled, "Anything is possible, and if you think of something intently. It is not only possible, it is real. It is also inevitable you will cross paths with your creation. Unless of course, you intentionally dissolve it.
I've wondered if I could do that. I thought about it and even tried some experiments. In doing so I planted seeds. Our combined energy and the force of Love, made it possible here tonight. But there is something else you might not have noticed, someone from above helped us."

As we stood and stretched I felt a presence, stepping aside immediately. It was a Friend who used my body on request. They waved my hand across the night sky, from horizon to horizon. Dissolving a wide swath of the starry expanse. Revealing an astonishing glittering rainbow, on a background of shimmering gold. It was the Grid, the rainbow of infinite possibilities. Their way of saying, "Anything is possible." They left some potent energy as a parting gift. We all stared in wonder then laughed and hugged.
I said, "A spiritual being from another planet, stopped by personally to show us that. Again it is my firm belief that anything is possible. It's built into the design of this magic world."
I gave our guests some of the energy, a little more than each could handle. Then shared the rest with Val, that was a nice hug. We were all wound up so Val took over. We sat in the lotus pose in a seven pointed star, all focused on the center. Off we went.

We slipped off to the chain of lakes, using a cabin owned by a friend. We planned to spend the time boating and hiking. By then we had a utility boat. In keeping with local custom it was dangerously overpowered. It went like a rocket, we even water-skied behind it.
The day after we arrived felt special from the time we got up. By then we were familiar with each other, like married couples become. We were always on the same page. After breakfast we took off in the boat, spending the morning exploring creeks. We ate lunch by the marina with an upbeat vacation crowd. The boat ride back to the cabin was exhilarating.
Later in the day our thoughts turned to supper. I roasted vegetables on the grill, Val made pasta, salads and rolls. We enjoyed a quiet dinner. After a mystical night trip in the boat, we snuggled in front of the wood stove. At some point we crossed the snuggle line and went into the bedroom.

After Val gave me the perfect smack. I knew she had given me a precious second chance. I got serious about getting balanced. Instead of maintenance yoga, I started a systematic top to bottom rebuild. It worked out well, Val was on the same quest. We reinforced each other considerably. She was really the leader, there was something calling her. She also appreciated her freedom from working, that was her precious second chance. I cannot overstate how wonderful it was, doing that together.
We knew the first thing was to improve our etheric forms. They get out of alignment from living, just like our physical ones. They can be further developed in the same way. Good things come from refining our etheric forms. Our vital energy goes way up, and the connections to our higher bodies become active. We added ten minutes of energy work to our routines. Over a few weeks we stepped that up to thirty, that felt like the sweet spot.
We took a sabbatical from cannabis, alcohol, sugar and caffeine. The only thing we missed was hot chocolate and cookies late at night. I will admit, we fell off the wagon a few times.
We ate fruit for breakfast and salads for lunch. Then something like brown rice and vegetables for dinner. Plenty of fresh air, sunlight and exercise. Basically, we were walking the walk.

Acupuncture is based on energy meridians, they are working directly with the etheric form. It is possible to become aware of our etheric forms, and work with them consciously. That is how people walk on burning coals. They insulate their feet with etheric matter. I used it to help Nancy and others. Also to keep myself warm, to communicate with animals and several more.
The advanced Taoists are internal energy masters, qigong is one of their systems. In a way it is like

yoga. There is a health related popular side, then the obscure side with detailed energy techniques. They have strucutured procedures for working with our etheric forms.
We found useful books in an apothecary shop in San Francisco. The owner was an understated Asian gentleman. He looked like he was sixty, but I knew from his aura he was considerably older. He knew about us the same way, we always had interesting talks. He graciously helped us with our energy work.

After three months of the etheric improvement project, we started on astral chakras. They are somewhat like physical organs, esoteric yoga books were helpful. It was around then, we started remaining conscious all of the time. Recharge time was as orderly as our daily lives, that was around four hours a day. With so much energy, we had to throttle way down around others.
After six months of chakra work, we started carefully with kundalini techniques. With a strong inclination to work together. A year after we started, we were methodically raising our evolutionary force. What a difference for me, having control.
We focused on the old school yoga system, the internal alchemy techniques were helpful. We liked the Pantajali Sutras, they were taped to the bedroom walls. The kriya system is the smoothest and safest. But that is a long haul approach, we had ants in our pants.

After we went into the bedroom at the cabin. Val was lying on top and we were kissing. I got a message, she was my good deed. It was time to put the pieces together. What was special, I was supposed to go all out. The first time ever, no holding back.
I had no idea what would happen. So I told Val about my insight to get her opinion. She had the same conviction. We sat on the floor in the lotus pose, facing each other. Then started kundalini techniques. It all went perfectly, nice and smooth to the top of our heads. The fountain of light over my saintly wife.
I had no need to go further, I was already in heaven looking at Val. She was doing the same, it was producing considerable energy. We focused and kept winding up, giving it everything.

We made it to the fourth floor as giant radiant orbs. Balanced between the manifest and infinity. The pathway between the physical and the divine, is anchored in the middle. Our histories were open books. We marveled at the living tapestries around us. There were considerably larger, delicate filigree outlines. We we aware of six dimensions but knew they went further. They were the patterns for our complete selves, our divine blueprints.
As engaging as that was, there was a tidal wave of power looming. We knew what it was, our next stop would be the seventh floor. The intricate patterns of our surroundings, began to align across six dimensions. We knew when they did, we would make the leap. I sent her all of my love, she sent me hers. There was a moment when everything stopped. Then a flash of all consuming Love, off we went.

We made it to the seventh floor. Our surroundings were glorious colors and music, flowing and evolving. We had universal awareness, our joy was complete.
all dreams are true
everything is beautiful
brilliant colors
elegant sounds
exquisite sensations
emotions overwhelmed
profound thoughts
perfect abstraction
total integration
unlimited possibilities

All of our bodies were active. We were firing on all cylinders, balanced.

We surveyed the garden. All of the planets are diversely populated in the energetic realms. Most have sparse physical life as etheric forms. They will flourish again, when the planet enters another phase suitable for physical life.
The exception is Venus. It has a large etheric population and a small physical contingent. Who are protected by etheric shields, and highly advanced technically and spiritually. They visit regularly, helping from behind the scenes. Their craft are often seen by those who enjoy the night sky.
I had previously tried to commune with the Sun, without success. Now things were different, the Sun is a conscious being of immense scope. Earth's spirit will become a star someday, when she advances into her next kingdom. I hope our present friendship will continue.

We smiled, seeing time is a playpen for our early development. We laughed remembering when we believed, the physical world was the only reality. We saw that Earth is a speck of dust, in a remote corner of a tiny galaxy. We watched galaxies shrink into solid matter.
We saw empty space teeming with life. In their true forms, pure energy. Few descend into the physical shadow realm, just as few walk on the deep ocean floor.
We noticed a direct path to the Source, it was calling insistently. We abandoned ourselves, raining back into the ocean of Love.

We were perfectly merged into a oneness with everything. After being separated for a instant, we were All again. Not complex or overwhelming, innocent and pure. In that moment of separation we had infinite experience. Every instant was a priceless treasure.
How could I have forgotten, I was Val and she was me. That Love is everything and everything is Love. We had no intention of ever leaving again.

Then the preparation paid off. Otherwise our physical bodies would not have survived. Going is easy, coming back is hard. After several eternities we felt a ripple, "that was strange - what was that - did we feel that - it did it again - what is it - it is a beacon - we are meant to follow"
Off we went on another adventure, chasing the beacon. Something gently separated us but we were still one. Eventually there was a hint of a tug. It got stronger as our bodies reeled us in.

We made it back to the cabin in a highly energized state. Dangerously so, as far as damaging our physical bodies. I had concerns mine would stay intact if I reentered. They did not look normal, appearing cold and stiff. Things were getting worse, we decided sooner was better. I cautiously made the alignment.
If we had been gone longer, or were not so balanced. That would have ended our lessons in the physical world. We used every trick we knew to gently reanimate our bodies. It was an hour before dawn. We decided to hike to a clifftop, to burn off energy and watch the sunrise. We could have sprinted up the steep trail, but our bodies would have been damaged. We patiently climbed, winding ourselves down.

We held hands watching the sunrise over the lake, still well into rapture. Our thought bodies were active. The view was glorious, every beautiful sunrise in one. After the sun cleared the horizon, we were winding down using astral senses. We hiked until noon then slept nine hours. That was the first time I slept more than five, since I was a teen.
We had a light dinner. Then sat outside watching the stars, holding hands in silence.
I whispered, "I love you."
She whispered, "I love you too."

The mood in the morning was sacred reflection. The circle was complete. I helped her as she helped

me, back in that distant time. The world was Val's oyster after that, having won the grail. She was an enlightened being, by divine grace I was able to participate. My entire life was worthwhile for that one moment.

At breakfast we looked at each other and left our bodies. After that we had to be careful how we looked at others. More than a passing glance, sometimes caused a spiritual experience. In some cases a profound one lasting hours.

Alone together we rarely spoke, it was slow and awkward. We did not meditate to charge the Villa before parties. Easily doing so with a thought.

Healing animals was straightforward, there was no pain afterwards. Rarely and only under divine grace, I went beyond realignment with people. Mostly children involved in true accidents, events not in their life plans.

I knew of impending problems at the factory, always averting the failures. The same thing on tech assists elsewhere. I went through the motions to avoid a ripple. But I knew the problem when I touched the door on arrival. I communed with the factories, they are quite aware. They also have basic moods and emotions.

We roamed the upper floors with facility, meditation was intense. When everything was just right, we floated off our bench in the herb garden. That was always fun.

On the way home Val said thoughtfully, "That must have been difficult when you were young. Not knowing anything about it."

I nodded, thinking about those days. Then I smiled and said, "I would do it all over a thousand times. If that's what it took to find you."

CHAPTER 29 - ENDS AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Valerie and I had interesting lives together. There was always a new twist, something to learn or fulfilling ways to serve. We had many wonder filled years, laughing, learning and loving.
Al was a few years older than Nancy. His war injury caused more problems later in life. After he was gone, Nancy came to live with us. It was a help to her during that difficult time.
Consider the everyday courage for people to get married. Well knowing after a lifetime together, one must watch the other die. Neither knowing who as the inevitable approaches. Then somehow carrying on.

Nancy was an angel, the years we all lived together were precious. She was three years older than Val, in time she left as well. She had been my mother. The help I gave her was nothing, compared to what she did for me. We shared other lives as well.
Val and I knew when she would leave. By divine grace Nancy did not. She was healthy and happy until then, leaving while she slept. When she went to bed for the last time, Val and I sat on the couch together. Happy for our wonderful sister, but we still held each other and cried.
Shortly after she left, Val and I went to bed early. There was a tug and we and knew what it was. We rolled out and thought of Nancy, attending her reunion on the third floor. There was a throng of people, we were the only ones with physical bodies.
Nancy was not surprised to see us, there were no secrets between the sisters. Al was surprised though, he thought Val and I had come Home as well. We hugged Nancy, sharing her joy. Her entire life on Earth quickly fading to a brief memory.
Then Val and I were alone again. We felt that was the right time to stop entertaining. We hosted those dinners every year along with many others. Oktoberfests, weddings, impromptus, hayrides, medieval festivals and more. Val also ended the yoga classes, but still worked with a few students on a personal basis.
We turned to introspective lives. Spending more time gardening, or holding hands and watching the sunset. Enjoying the simple things, savoring the moments that make up a life.

Val was eight years older, she was hale and hearty to the end. During her last year we knew when she would leave. That was a sacred time, our love grew deeper. I tried not to count off the days, of course that was impossible. The last one was deeply spiritual and timeless.
But I was happy, she was going Home after a life well spent. We had reached our goals. One was to find each other and connect to previous lives. Then pick up where we left off, and go as far as we could. We wanted to raise our evolutionary force in the heart of civilization. Somewhere more challenging than a remote sanctuary. More so without teachers or a support system. The most important part was to have fun. We had done the austere approach. We wanted to lighten things up to stay in balance. Fun is the icing on the cake of life.

Valerie left in the early morning. We sat in the lotus pose, looking in each other's eyes.
I told her, "I love you."
She said, "I love you too." Then she closed her eyes for the last time.

I did not travel with her, and never left my body consciously again. I know I am busy at night, it is all blocked off for now. We had talked about it, deciding that for several reasons. Not the least being how wonderful our reunion will be. Despite knowing she is in a glorious place, I have missed her.

Something I have not mentioned, my vision grew worse over the years. The pesticides at the orchard damaged my optic nerves. Sometimes things like that are old business. During a savage time there was a strategy of war. Do not kill your enemies. Blind them so they would burden their community.

Like the old saying, "What goes around, comes around".
By divine grace I see well enough to fend for myself. Now I write with a permanent marker. I can read it without a magnifier if the letters are an inch high.
When my vision grew worse I tried to fix the problem. Nothing happened, that disappointed me. I could have forced the issue, but I knew that was not the right path. I realized I should pay off an old debt and this is an opportune time. I have dealt with things the best I could. In truth I am happy with a slap on the wrist. Impaired vision is a far cry from no vision. I will be glad to sign off on that one.

The Villa was lonely without Val, so I gave it to a young friend. He and his wife were regular guests, they loved the place. I hoped they would continue what Val and I started.
I lived in an apartment for a year until I retired. By then there was a new factory. They had stopped offering promotions, they knew I liked my job. I was working to live, not living to work. Valerie and our wonderful Villa were my life.
They had a retirement party at work. It was hard to keep my composure, with so many friends and a lifetime of memories. All of the challenges, and the relentless dedication over decades. I was satisfied though, I learned a wide range of industrial skills. They will be valuable in future lives.

After all of those years and experiences, I was alone again in a small empty apartment. As usual in following the Way, I had come full circle. I knew my departure age since I was young, deliberately blocking the day and time.
It is the divine order, the higher helps the lower. Because of Love that raises both. It is a marvelous, self-evolving system. I felt drawn to the Ozarks, an ancient mountain range in the southern United States. It was a calling to give back to Earth, for all she has done for me. At least to make a small gesture to her Love. I wanted to create a wildlife sanctuary and live a contemplative life.

I found a secluded parcel next to a National Forest. Camping while I built a small house. After six months the electricity was on, I used a generator until then. That was a red letter day, things got easier.
At first I hauled water from a County well. In winter the barrels were in the living room, so they would not freeze. I assembled a rainwater collection system, with micro-filtration and sterilization. Another milestone, hot and cold pressurized water.
The quarter acre garden needed a six foot fence. The deer were not shy about sampling things. I built a small barn and a greenhouse. There were wildlife feeding areas with assorted grains and supplements. Countless new friends discovered the food.
I get up before the sun and work hard all day. Sleeping deeply in a dreamless sleep. Sometimes I wander in the woods. At first I took my flute, after a time I preferred the rustle of the wind. I played on the porch now and then. Until I gave Shakti to a brilliant talent in the local high school.
I dug a pond for the wildlife. After a few years my pick was worn to a nub, it had to be replaced. I established flower beds and ornamental shrubs, along with assorted wild forage plants. A driveway was leveled then topped with stone. I built an entrance gate, and fenced the perimeter with barbed wire. Heating with wood means the annual effort, producing stacks of firewood. As I worked I considered the Zen wisdom, "Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water."

Every week I went to town to shop, eat lunch and touch base with humanity. The day finally came when I could not see well enough to drive. After that I have gone to town by the good graces of a friend.
While I was doing those things, I studied nature. Uncountable diverse living things, each in a highly dynamic state. All held in a delicate shifting balance. Trillions of living things balanced as a whole. That is what I was studying, balance.

The best part of living in the woods is the explosion of Love every spring. A pair of birds get amorous then build a nest. After mating flights she lays eggs, they are a prized food for everything. The parents defend their offspring and satisfy their appetites. The most treacherous part of a bird's life is leaving the nest. A life or death roll of the dice. If they do flutter to safety, their parents must teach them to survive. The clock is ticking because most will migrate soon, thousands of miles in some cases.
All of the frogs are doing that, all of the rabbits, all of the insects and plants. Every being plays an important part. The repetition of the annual cycle is astonishing. There is an important reason to study nature. It is a reflection of the cosmos, the lessons are universal.

It is interesting living in the woods, the days go by and things are peaceful. Then something happens that cuts through everything. I was sitting on the porch at dusk in the middle of winter. The clouds were low and ominous, delivering more snow. An unearthly silence settled, it felt astral. There is a lake and wetlands nearby. I heard gunfire earlier, it was hunting season.
As it flew toward the house, a goose shattered the silence. Calling frantically, it's lifelong mate had been shot. The goose was flying low over the trees. Desperately trying to find the love of it's life. It circled back to the lake, calling and calling. There was absolute silence, except the piercing forlorn cries. I stayed on the porch listening, it continued for hours. Well into the night it ended. But I still hear it sometimes as I fall asleep.

The Ozark mountains are honeycombed with caves. I had an aversion to them after an incident as a child. With one step into a cave entrance, I slid twenty feet down a shaft. It was steep, wet and slippery as ice. It was dark at the bottom, but I could feel bones and animals skins. They made the same mistake I did.
I was terrified, unable to climb one step. I got out by pushing against the walls, to keep from sliding back. Halfway up I was exhausted, my arms and legs were shaking. I had never heard of breathing exercises, but I started doing them. They gave me the strength to finish the climb. I never cared for caves after that.

I was out in the woods following a tug, and found a vertical shaft twelve feet across. It tapered to an opening three feet wide, around fifteen feet down. A whitetail deer had fallen in, a mature doe. She landed just right or she would have gone further. She looked up at me, it was an arrow to my heart. I told her to keep perfectly still, that I would return.
I have a garden tractor and a portable logging winch. I hurried home and loaded the trailer. Four miles in thick woods with a garden tractor is a trek. The sun was sinking in the sky.
I tied off to a tree. Looping the rope around one leg and inching my way down. The doe and I were on the same page from looking at each other. She was afraid but never moved a muscle. I finally got a lifting strap around her.

By the time I climbed out I was exhausted. That episode did not improve my opinion of caves. I winched her up as fast as possible, finally she was out of the hole. She rested on her side recovering. I kissed her and showered her with Love, petting her to charge her up. She was so beautiful and sacred. I brought food, water and bowls. She was thirsty and struggled to her feet. After a bit she walked off.
I slept in the trailer until sunrise, then blocked the shaft with dead trees. A pair of foxes used it for a den after that. The kits were fun to watch each spring, spunky and cute.

A black bear was the most dangerous animal. One of his rear paws was infected, he was in pain. There was water and foil in my backpack. I folded a pan for the water and laid down my peanut butter sandwiches. That helped break the ice. It took a lot to put him to sleep. His paw was a mess, we got it sorted out. I do not think he ever heard of toenail clippers.

What a magnificent beast, he came to visit now and then. Keeping me on my toes, hiding behind trees to scare me. Then scampering off more than pleased with himself. I leave dry dog food by the forest during severe winter weather. His prints are easy to spot.

The hardest animal was a whitetail deer, a big buck at least four years old. A bullet had crippled him, he was dragging himself with his front legs. He was in rough shape, almost starved. I was close to home so I went for food and water, he appreciated that.
We got down to business. It took everything I had and then some. I had to rest for several days. I saw him standing on a ridge later with a big rack of antlers, a majestic sight.

As I closed in on my last birthday, I put my affairs in order. Looking forward to wandering off into the sunset. No one knew any of this except Val and their part. Frankly I had no intention of changing that. Then I got my last good deed, a compulsion to write this down.
On that subject I will state, this life story is freely released into the public domain. I know from personal experience, there are others with the same problems I faced when I was young. I shudder to think, how many end up in institutions or worse. If this helps anyone in any way, I will consider it more than worthwhile. I plan to give it to my friend, it is my understanding they will know how to share it.
The long years seem like minutes now, like I've been waiting for a bus. While I wrote I thought of how it will be the last year. Each morning wondering, "Is this the day I will go Home to my beloved?"

If you are reading this, it means I am over the rainbow. Back Home with my dear Valerie. What a joyous moment to see and hold her again. We talked about what we might do after this adventure, never deciding anything. Even so, I doubt it will be long before we return. For another lesson in this little schoolhouse called Earth.
To learn, grow and purify ourselves. To practice Love.

With all of my heart I send,
Love For All!